Commentary
June 2004

Does Sharon Have a Plan?
Hillel Halkin

Explaining the Bush Tax Cuts
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Do We Have Enough Troops in Iraq?
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The Cathedral and the Cube
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The Church of Civil Rights
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Is the Musical Comedy Dead?
Terry Teachout

Books in Review

Dan Seligman • Jacob Heilbrunn • Joshua Kurlantzick
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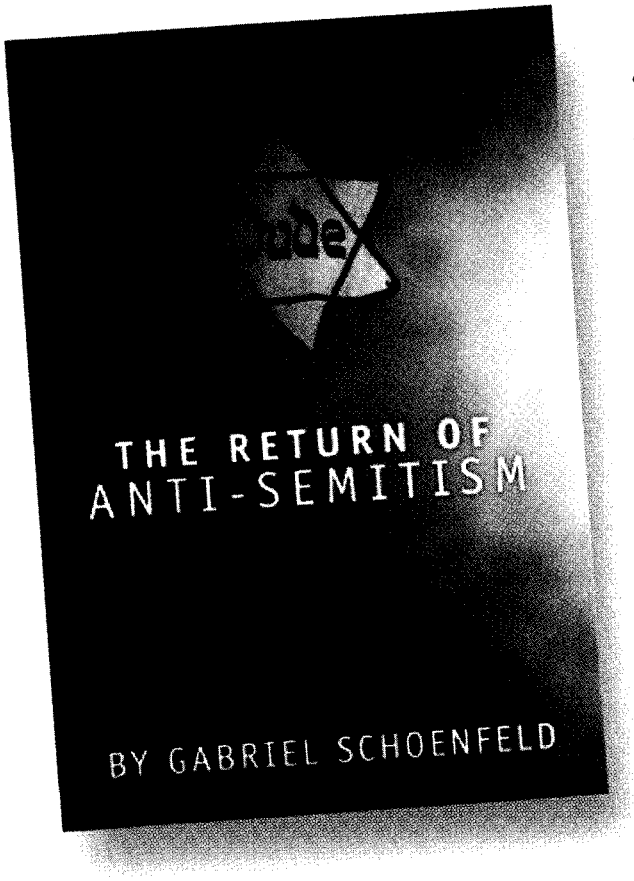

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Commentary

Vol. 117 · June 2004 · No. 6

Articles

17

Does Sharon Have a Plan? *Hillel Halkin*

The prime minister's move to "disengage" from the Palestinians, temporarily stalled, makes a great deal of sense—if one does not take it at face value.

23

Explaining the Bush Tax Cuts *Bruce Bartlett*

Utterly ad-hoc in appearance, the President's fiscal policy rests on a compelling logic.

28

Do We Have Enough Troops in Iraq? *Victor Davis Hanson*

The real strategic issue is not how many soldiers are on the ground, but how they are used.

33

The Cathedral and the Cube: Reflections on European Morale *George Weigel*

To understand the continent's political incapacity, it helps to look beyond politics.

39

Justice for Terrorists *J. Andrew Kent*

Can we afford to try members of al Qaeda in ordinary civilian courts?

Observations

43

The Church of Civil Rights *Wilfred M. McClay*

To misread the early movement, as many do, is to miss the real reasons for its success.

Music

47

Is the Musical Comedy Dead? *Terry Teachout*

Audiences are as hungry as ever, but the mold may be broken beyond repair.

Letters

3

An American in Paris; FDR; becoming Jewish; etc.

Books

53 On Paradise Drive by David Brooks *Dan Seligman*

55 Saboteurs by Michael Dobbs *Jacob Heilbrunn*

57 Inside the Mirage by Thomas W. Lippman *Joshua Kurlantzick*

59 Gay Marriage by Jonathan Rauch *Kay S. Hymowitz*

62 The Man Who Would Be King by Ben Macintyre *Algis Valiunas*

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Commentary
June 2004

Letters from Readers

An American in Paris

To the Editor:

I would like to comment on Nidra Poller's article, "Betrayed by Europe: An Expatriate's Lament" [March], which I read with both sorrow and indignation. Nidra Poller, who has lived in France for a number of years, describes my country in a way that no doubt owes more to her imagination as a novelist than to reality itself.

At no point in the article did I recognize the France that I serve with pride, and where my family chose to live in circumstances similar to those of Nidra Poller's own family. While it is true that anti-Semitic acts have been committed in France, I cannot accept her allegation that "Jews are being persecuted every day in France," or that the French authorities can be accused of remaining silent. Nothing could be further from the truth, particularly when one is familiar with the commitment of the French president and the government to fight against all forms of racism and anti-Semitism, and when one observes the notable decrease in anti-Semitic acts. This is something that is recognized by all persons of good faith, from the president of Israel to the head of the Anti-Defamation League, both of whom have recently paid visits to France.

But did Nidra Poller really wish to demonstrate good faith? One might doubt it after reading certain passages of her article that verge on extremism ("We are not free in France"; "the Republic is under siege [by Muslims]"; "France is in fact an adversary of the United States") and an astounding xenophobia, as when, describing the French people's "cowardice," she writes "they disgust me" and even calls on America to "come over here and colonize this place."

In France, we have a saying that "what is excessive is insignificant," and perhaps I should have ignored Nidra Poller's article for that reason. But when an article smacks of racism, I feel I have no choice but to respond. I am astonished that such a piece was published in your magazine, which is dedicated to combating such a scourge.

Jean-David Levitte
Ambassador of France
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

Reading Nidra Poller's article, I ask myself whether I am the victim of a hallucination. It must be so, since her essay bears no relation to reality.

Anti-Semitism does indeed exist in France; to be precise, it is an Arab anti-Semitism, which has also turned into a more generalized anti-*goyism* (the *goy* in this case being the ordinary Frenchman). The phenomenon is very serious, but its dimensions are nothing like what one would imagine from reading Nidra Poller's apocalyptic scenario. Publication of her article in a distinguished journal like Commentary is unfortunate; nourishing such fantasies serves the interest neither of the United States nor of the Jewish people, not to speak of France and Europe.

Alain Besançon
Paris, France

To the Editor:

I sympathize with the sentiments of Nidra Poller, but her account seems to me too darkly colored, a result perhaps of her experience living in the Parisian hothouse of the French elite.

My own experience of France, traveling and staying, goes back over 50 years and includes all parts of the country. Though I too have encountered the knee-jerk hostility described by Nidra Poller, it is not unanimous, even among the French elite. Jean-François Revel recently published a book condemning anti-Ameri-

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canism, and the scholar Philippe Roger has published a superb account of the phenomenon's history in France, dating all the way back to the 18th century.

In those days anti-Americanism took the form of a firm belief that the New World was, among other things, a poisonous land in which all the inhabitants were stunted, hermaphroditism was commonplace, and syphilis was contracted from eating iguanas. These were the ideas not of eccentrics but of respectable figures like Voltaire and Diderot. Benjamin Franklin, the American ambassador to France, used the occasion of a dinner party to expose this absurdity. After steering the conversation around to the subject of the supposedly "stunted" growth of Americans, he asked everyone to stand up. The Americans towered over the Frenchmen and especially over the Abbé Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, who had been industriously spreading these cockamamie ideas. Raynal was not at all embarrassed; he dismissed the incident as "vulgar empiricism," which in no way refuted ideas held by all the great minds of Europe.

The present form of elite anti-Americanism took shape during the 19th century, and was fixed in its expressions by the time of World War I. The hostile rhetoric used against Bush, Reagan, and other American presidents is essentially a recycled version of remarks made about Andrew Jackson. *Plus ça change.*

As for my own experience, I have never much cared for Paris, where the sort of sneering described by Nidra Poller is thick in the air. But in my extensive travels in *la France profonde*, I have, with rare exceptions, consistently encountered a deep and abiding warmth toward America, its culture, and its people. This is expressed both in personal friendships and in the astonishing kindness and helpfulness of complete strangers.

HERB GREER
Salisbury, England

TO THE EDITOR:

If Nidra Poller is looking for a country that is not "so vast I haven't the faintest idea where I would put myself," a country where it does not snow much, where the housing is more affordable than in New York and people do not firebomb synagogues or trash America, she is overlooking an obvious option. Sorry, but I cannot do anything about the shopping malls; we have them here, too.

MICHAEL GERVER
Raanana, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

Please let Nidra Poller know that she is welcome in Atlanta. My wife and I would be happy to put her up until she's back on her feet. My wife is originally English, I am originally Irish. Though we both are now thoroughly American, we come with a squadron of Russian, Bulgarian, French, Spanish, Italian, and French friends, so she will even have a European ambience.

PATRICK CARROLL
Atlanta, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR:

The trajectory of Nidra Poller's life is exactly the reverse of my own. She left the U.S. in 1972, at the time of the Vietnam war, because she was sick of American "imperialism" and attracted by the "intellectualism" of the French Left. I left France in 1981, at the beginning of the Mitterrand years, because I had been disillusioned by the very same spirit of the French Left and saw in the "American dream" the cultural matrix for greater personal achievement.

Yet these two opposite trajectories have left us in the same place. Thirty years later, shocked by the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe and particularly in France, Nidra Poller is considering a return to the U.S. As for me, having spent a quarter-century here as a resident alien, I finally took the oath and became an American citizen. The reasons for our respective decisions seem quite different, but when we look at them more carefully, they are related.

As I explained in a recent article in the French journal *Commentaire*, there were many reasons for my voluntary change of nationality, but they can be summarized under a single heading: the apathy and complete lack of solidarity in French society. The French care for only one thing—their individual welfare and comfort.

Consider what has become one of the main expressions of the *exception française*: the national penchant for going on strike. One may think that all these people marching and chanting in the streets of French cities are passionate and generous progressives, struggling for the improvement of collective life. But the reality is quite different: they are struggling only to keep everything in place, to preserve their own so-called *avantages acquis* ("acquired benefits"). The strikers' only passion is for the status quo.

Regarding the anti-Semitism described by Nidra Poller, the French behave in the same way. I do not consider French nationals to be more anti-Semitic than their European neighbors. With a Muslim community in France of five million, anti-Semitism there inevitably feeds on international events. According to official statistics, one act of anti-Semitic violence occurred in 1998, nine in 1999. At the end of September 2000, after Arafat launched the second *intifada*, the number jumped suddenly to 116, and then it increased again after 9/11.

How did French public opinion react to these hate crimes? With indifference, by looking the other way. The hatred and persecution of the Jewish community go unnoticed by the French as long as it does not disturb their daily routine and comfort. This attitude of *laisser-faire* is not new; it is the same as the one that permitted the Vichy government to collaborate with the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Another component in this special brand of anti-Semitism is directly connected with anti-Americanism and concerns France's continuous mourning for its past "grandeur." In the French psyche, Israel and America are seen as states with messianic visions, as contrasted with France's inability to project an ambitious future for itself, laying bare the secondary role France now plays on the international stage. In France, apathy and nostalgia are two sides of the same pusillanimity.

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I regret that I cannot fix Nidra Poller's shattered French dream. But her account reminds us that even when history does not accommodate our romantic mirages, it is never too late to take the future back into our own hands, and to build it again.

JEAN-MICHEL HEIMONET
Catholic University
Washington, D.C.

NIDRA POLLER writes:

Let me begin in reverse order by thanking Jean-Michel Heimonet most warmly for his endorsement and his very instructive amplification of my argument, and Patrick Carroll and Michael Gerver for their kind offers of hospitality. After reading my confession—a serial expatriate, an unregenerate gadfly—it takes courage as well as generosity to think of letting me come and live in your town.

I agree with Herb Greer that Paris is sometimes the capital of sneer, but I did not have the luxury of pursuing my career elsewhere in France. Besides, although I have roots in the Midi, and although I am the last to deny the joys of Mediterranean light, the sad fact is that things have changed there, too. José Bové has done his work, and the phenomena I describe in my article are to be found not just in the capital but in the provinces. As I hope I made clear, however, the hostility is directed not so much at individual Americans or Jews as at "the enemy," those world dominators, the plotting Elders of Zion and the looming, God-fearing U.S.

Mr. Greer's delicious anecdote about Benjamin Franklin leads me from one witty ambassador to the humorless letter by another and rather different ambassador, Jean-David Levitte. Not that Ambassador Levitte is necessarily humorless himself; I can easily imagine the job description that he has been assigned to fill. Still, I am a little embarrassed for *la France*, hitting me with the full, awesome power of the Foreign Ministry. But so be it.

My article began with these modest, rather self-effacing words: "It is not so easy to know when you're deluding yourself and when you are finally seeing the light." They apply to me, and to everything that followed in my article. And they are pertinent to Ambassador Levitte's reaction, too. I am surprised that a sophisticated European could so radically misread the tone of my essay, written from the heart—albeit a broken heart—and steeped in love for a country where I have lived not "for a number of years" but for over three decades. But I permit myself to wonder where Ambassador Levitte has been living during those years. If he honestly feels threatened by the "extremism" in my wistful, half-jocular invitation to the Yanks to come over and colonize France, I suggest that he ponder the French media, where, in dead seriousness, the Yanks are vilified for already doing just that, from morning to night, seven days a week, ad nauseam.

Is it false to say that "Jews are being persecuted every day in France"? If so, it is no less false for Ambassador Levitte to contend categorically that the French government is fighting racism and anti-Semitism. It is false to claim that everyone of good faith acknowledges the "notable decrease" in anti-Semitic acts. All such affirmations are too general to be confirmed. But I, at least, cited examples of types of persecution, while testifying as well to a widespread absence of persecution. I also pinpointed the stunning silence of French officialdom in the face of the single worst anti-Semitic crime so far—the atrocious murder and mutilation of Sébastien Selam last November. So which is the truer description of the condition of Jews in France at the dawn of the 21st century? A notable decrease in the number of incidents—or a notable increase in violence?

And where exactly is the bad faith of which Ambassador Levitte accuses me? I did not say the Republic was under siege from Muslims but that it was under siege from "Muslim rage," from "political Islam on the march." I was talking about undeniable and specific acts of violence in schools, hospitals, streets, and stadiums. I was speaking of the unconscionable demands by Islamist leaders for what can be fairly described as a creeping imposition of *shari'a* law, complete with the oppression of women. If this is "racism," if we are not free to identify the source of danger, then I have all the more reason to fear for the future of my French grandchildren.

The recent conference of the UOIF (Union of Islamic Organizations in France) is a perfect illustration of what I mean. Why has this offshoot of the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood been allowed to develop and prosper? If *laïcité* is indeed the core value of the French Republic, and if the UOIF is clearly, openly, and aggressively challenging that *laïcité*, is the Republic not besieged? As I noted in my article, the government has promulgated a law against "ostensible signs of religious affiliation" in schools; it is to go into effect in September. But we are already seeing indications that the government may bend under pressure from radical Islamic forces and allow Muslim girls to wear a bandana in place of the *hijab*, or Islamic veil—the main such "sign" that the law was drafted to proscribe. This will fool no one, least of all those Christians and Jews whose discreet crosses and yarmulkes will still be forbidden under the same law.

As for French-American relations, France *is* an adversary of the United States, however sincerely my French compatriots may be convinced otherwise. I can understand why the government would prefer to cloak this issue in a fog of discourse, but please do not expect me to play along. What do allies do in wartime? They join together and fight the common enemy. (In peacetime they compete—peaceably.) But what do you call an ally who in wartime does not fight by your side, who opposes you on every crucial point of policy connected with that war, who bends over backward to convey his friendly intentions to the enemy, and who, when convenient, denies the very reality of the conflict?

During the recent outburst of violence in Iraq, French anchormen stood unprotected and unmolested in the midst of ranting jihadis brandishing RPG's and promising to slit American throats, burn Ameri-

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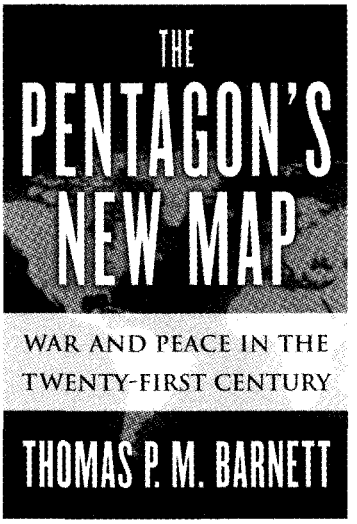

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cans alive, spill American blood, mutilate American bodies. Nor were these vain promises, but merely a rundown of what had been carried out in Falluja the day before. Was French TV simply reporting the news, or was it dutifully relaying the insurgents' propaganda? In the meantime, French citizens who seem to have worked happily enough in the Iraq of Saddam Hussein were being advised by their prime minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, to pack up and leave; the prime minister concluded his speech with a bombastic, "We have always been for a free Iraq and we are always for a free Iraq!" Yes—just so long, evidently, as someone else pays the price of the freeing.

Where is the fiction, where is the reality? Fiction is a way of capturing reality without denying the subjectivity of the observing eye; scholarship, journalism, and official pronouncements, despite heroic attempts at objectivity, are constantly in danger of fictionalizing. I may well have a novelist's approach to the reporting of current events, but every single detail of my portrayal of France has been developed elsewhere by reputable journalists, political scientists, philosophers, sociologists, community leaders, and even government officials.

Both Jean-David Levitte and Alain Besançon accuse me of imagining things. In correcting me, Mr. Besançon calls attention to the "Arabness" of French anti-Semitism. But the "Arabs" of France are French citizens or residents, and to place all the blame on them seems to me to "smack of racism" (to borrow from Ambassador Levitte). Without the implicit collaboration of a good portion of the intellectual elite, and the apparent failure of the police and judicial system to punish the actors and squelch their ever growing ardor, they would be seething but impotent grumblers instead of the mortal danger they are to themselves and others.

Am I imagining things? Would that it were so. Would that my worst fears were the figments of a wild and overwrought imagination, and the denials of Messrs. Levitte and Besançon a magical force that would make their version of French reality come true.

FDR

To the Editor:

I wish to thank Arthur Waldron for his generous review of my book about Franklin D. Roosevelt [Books in Review, March] and to take issue with a couple of the points he made. Roosevelt was well aware that the Communist Chinese were making little effort to combat the Japanese in World War II, and he had serious misgivings about them, as he did about Chiang Kai-shek. He simply deferred consideration of how to work with the Chinese until after the war.

Mr. Waldron writes that "the best way forward would have been to attack Japan through China with reorganized Chinese and American troops systematically advancing northward," but this would have been a recipe for disaster. It would have doubled American casualties in the Pacific theater, miring a vast army in continental China; retarded the ability of the U.S. to bomb the Japanese home islands; siphoned off resources from the European theater, delaying the Normandy landings by up to a year; and assured a much greater Soviet penetration of Western Europe, with no likely alteration of the ultimate outcome of the Chinese civil war.

Conrad Black
New York City

To the Editor:

Arthur Waldron criticizes Conrad Black for claiming that Roosevelt effectively pushed the Japanese to attack. Were this so, according to Mr. Waldron, FDR "would not have put his beloved fleet at Pearl Harbor, from which it could not have been effectively supported in case of a real war."

But contrary to Mr. Waldron's claim, the Roosevelt administration did indeed go to great lengths to goad Japan, by embargoing scrap iron and then petroleum, without which the Japanese economy and war machine would have ground to a halt. In *The Cruise of the Lanikai* (1973), the late rear admiral Kemp Tolley recounts how as a young lieutenant he was ordered to assume command of a small sailing craft in the Philippines in November 1941 for the purpose of spying on Japanese operations in the waters adjacent to Indochina. Although he was not given explicit orders to do so, Tolley had little doubt that he was to cause an "incident" that could lead to war. As it turned out, his cruise was overtaken by the events of December 7.

In a more recent book, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed* (2001), Michael Gann uses newly released materials in the national archives to report on the disorganization that plagued official Washington in the autumn of 1941. All of the information necessary to predict a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was available to the government. That it was not assembled, properly analyzed, and distributed is due to a great extent to the failure of senior Navy leadership.

Finally, Mr. Waldron's assertion that the U.S. fleet could not be effectively supported at Pearl Harbor is plain wrong. Support of surviving units at Pearl Harbor and repair of the damaged ships began immediately after the attack and continued until the end of the war.

Robert C. Whitten
Cupertino, California

To the Editor:

In his review of Conrad Black's new biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Arthur Waldron chides the author for "celebrat[ing] every act of FDR's as a triumph." Mr. Waldron fails to mention, however, that Black's treatment of FDR's record on the Holocaust exemplifies this problem. Consider, for example, Black's description of the events leading to the one meaningful step Roosevelt took against the Holocaust. According to Black, when Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr. and his aides presented FDR (in January 1944) with a report on the Nazi genocide and the State Department's secret effort to obstruct rescue opportunities, Roosevelt "agreed with most of what his visitors told him . . . [and] the War Refugee Board was set up." Roosevelt "was determined to act, initially by setting up

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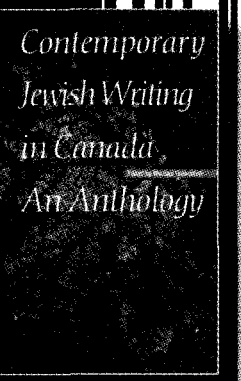

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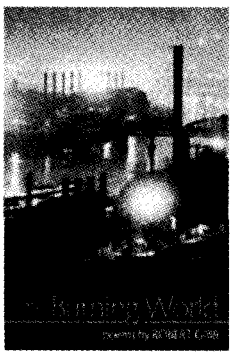

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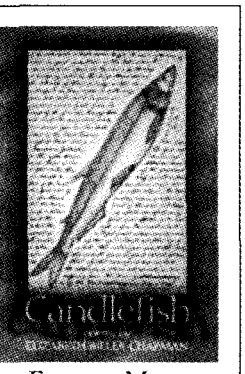

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refugee centers in the United States. He accepted 1,000 Jewish refugees from Italy and placed them in a camp in Oswego, New York, and announced his plan after the fact to the Congress."

Black gives the impression that as soon as Roosevelt learned the facts, he acted swiftly and courageously to save Jews. In fact, the Roosevelt administration had confirmed that the Nazis were carrying out genocide against the Jews of Europe in the autumn of 1942, yet FDR claimed there was nothing the Allies could do to help them except to win the war. He refused to press England to open Palestine to refugees or to permit immigration to the U.S. to the full extent of existing quotas. Quotas from Axis-controlled countries went 90 percent unfilled from late 1941 through early 1945; 190,000 quota places that could have saved lives went unused.

FDR finally acted only in response to strong outside pressures. Throughout 1943, newspaper ads and rallies by maverick Jewish activists known as the Bergson group roused public interest in the rescue issue. A Congressional resolution urging creation of a U.S. government agency to rescue Jews was the subject of well-publicized hearings in the House, was approved by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and was headed for adoption by the full Senate. At the same time, aides to Morgenthau discovered that the State Department had been sabotaging rescue opportunities and blocking the transmission of information about the Holocaust to the United States.

Armed with a potentially embarrassing report on the administration's record regarding the Nazi genocide, Morgenthau warned the President in January 1944 that "you have either got to move very fast, or the Congress of the United States will do it for you." Just days before the Senate was scheduled to vote on the rescue resolution, Roosevelt preempted it by creating the War Refugee Board. (During the final fifteen months of the war, the Board would play a key role in rescue initiatives that saved some 200,000 Jews and 20,000 non-Jews, including facilitating and financing the life-saving work of Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg.)

Black likewise distorts the record on the issue of America's failure to bomb the death camps. He claims that "if Roosevelt . . . had realized the centralized manner of the German liquidations of the innocent, [he] would surely have ordered a systematic campaign of bombing the gas chambers." But historians long ago demonstrated that the President received detailed information on the extent and nature of the Nazi genocide well before the spring of 1944, when the bombing idea was first considered—yet this did not move him to act. Black also fails to mention that U.S. bombers repeatedly struck German targets within five miles of Auschwitz's gas chambers—a fact first revealed in the pages of COMMENTARY by David S. Wyman in 1978.

Conrad Black is so busy celebrating FDR's few-and-far-between gestures that he fails fully to come to grips with the fact that Roosevelt could have done much more to help Europe's Jews.

RAFAEL MEDOFF
David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies
Melrose Park, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

To write a review of a 1,200-page, densely researched biography of a great and almost unknowable statesman like Franklin Roosevelt is a formidable task. Arthur Waldron's review meets this challenge fairly, but his emphasis on the questions raised by FDR's perceptions of Stalin's malleability and China's future prevents a full appreciation of the magnitude of Conrad Black's achievement.

Mr. Waldron makes the cogent observation that Black does not have enough "problems" with Roosevelt and remains too often uncritical of him. Any examination of Roosevelt's life, personal or political, gives ample room for criticism. But how do you treat flaws in a man who so self-evidently saved his country from 33 percent unemployment and who later skillfully led it through a war against barbarism? The tone of such an appraisal is very likely to sound either idolatrous or pettifogging.

Americans have not cared to look too closely at FDR's attempts to provoke an attack in the Atlantic and the Pacific to bring us into a war because most of us knew we should have been in that war. But we should note that even if he did provoke an attack, FDR did not necessarily know it would take place at Pearl Harbor, as Black convincingly demonstrates.

But Black is far too easy on Roosevelt's attitude toward efforts to save Jews during the Holocaust until he was almost forced to do so in early 1944. Cold pragmatic reasons against weakening wartime unity by making it seem like a war to save Jews have been invoked by some with great cogency, although this argument may not seem as reasonable in 2004 as it was in 1944, when many of us heard it flash out in angry moments from GI's in Europe otherwise bonded together to face Nazis.

Somehow, however, Roosevelt's coldness on the issue of rescuing Jews cannot be explained away. Something in his heart was wrong, and that diminishes his place in *our* hearts, although not that part of our hearts that can be swayed by gratitude to forgive even a grievous flaw. Mr. Waldron seemingly cannot forgive Roosevelt for not leaving us a better world than we have known these past 60 years. Some of us are grateful that he left us a world in which we are able to live.

M. DONALD COLEMAN
Mamaroneck, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

It was good to read Arthur Waldron's review of Conrad Black's biography of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. For over 50 years the man has been praised as a great leader who led us out of the Depression and guided the Allies to victory. But more and more historians are, like Mr. Waldron, having "more and more problems" with FDR.

Some of these historians have challenged the claim that Roosevelt's New Deal programs brought us out of the Depression; these policies, they argue, only made things worse. Revisionist

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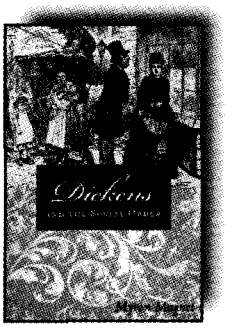

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historians have also accused Roosevelt of getting America into World War II by provoking Japan to attack us.

FDR's defenders once denied this latter accusation, but now many of them agree with it. With his disastrous demand for unconditional surrender by Germany and Japan, Roosevelt just may have prolonged the war.

ROBERT M. THORNTON
Fort Mitchell, Kentucky

ARTHUR WALDRON writes:

In one way or another, all of these fine letters confirm the basic thrust of my review. While Franklin Roosevelt's greatness is not in question, what is most emphatically in question is how to understand that greatness. This is particularly true when it comes to the numerous gray areas in his career—the "problems," as I called them.

I thank Conrad Black for understanding that my review was basically favorable even though I raised issues to which he has now responded. Unfortunately, in his response as in his book, he repeatedly tells us what Roosevelt was thinking or planning while providing little or no evidence. Perhaps the clearest example is his assertion here that FDR was aware the Chinese Communists were not fighting the Japanese very hard—something he actually does not say in his book, where he mentions only FDR's displeasure with the supposed laxity of the Nationalists.

This brings us to a paradox. From 1937 to 1945, the mighty Japanese army had at least as many divisions in China as in all other theaters combined. Scarcely any outside aid was available to the Chinese, and, if you combine what Mr. Black maintains in his book with what he says in his letter, none of them appears really to have been fighting. So how was it that, in eight years, the Japanese failed to win? Something is missing. I would propose that the Japanese were held back by the desperate Chinese resistance, mostly but not entirely led by the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek—until 1944, when the Chinese position began to deteriorate dramatically.

Roosevelt's attitude to all of this remains puzzling. Rhetorically, he was very pro-Chinese, and, contrary to Mr. Black, he *was* thinking about China's postwar role. Thus, at Cairo in 1943—the only occasion on which Chiang Kai-shek met his ostensible allies, minus Stalin—FDR paid far more attention to Chiang than suited Churchill, who regarded China as completely unimportant and tried to persuade Chiang and his wife to spend the day sightseeing while the grownups talked about the war.

Roosevelt did not "simply [defer] consideration of how to work with the Chinese until after the war," as Mr. Black would have it. He had a plan. He believed Chiang was and would remain the leader of China, and he relied on future negotiations, rather than on the notion of partition as in Europe, to reconcile Chiang to his deadly enemies, the Communists. Alas, the plan was unrealistic, and FDR did nothing to support it. Indeed, he undercut it by his decision to bypass China in the fighting on the ground, thus creating, on V-J day, an immense power vacuum extending from Manchuria to the Dutch East Indies.

No such power vacuum existed in Europe on V-E day, for Soviet, British, and American troops were already in firm possession of former Nazi territories, and thus in a position to dominate politics, most importantly by preventing local clients of one or another of the great powers from starting an unwanted war. Thus, Stalin saw to it that Thorez, Togliatti, and other Communist leaders did not lead rebellions in the Western zones, while the Americans, British, and French did nothing as Stalin and his successors installed pro-Soviet governments in the East, liquidated democrats, and crushed popular uprisings. Not a pretty picture, but at least one free of major war.

The East was quite different. There, in the absence of any clear delineation of zones between the U.S. and the USSR, minor figures like Kim Il-Sung were repeatedly able to start wars that did embroil the powers, creating dangerous threats to security that, as in Korea, continue to exist today. I am convinced that better planning for the postwar period could have averted these tragedies.

Mr. Black's other responses are, I am afraid, equally oracular. To my argument that Roosevelt should have put American troops on the ground in China, he replies that this would have "doubled American casualties." How can he know? Arguably, having strong and numerous Chinese allies might well have reduced losses. Nor is it clear that such a policy would have led to "miring a vast army in continental China" (is Chinese soil somehow different from the soil of France or Germany?) or "retarded the ability of the U.S. to bomb the Japanese home islands" (could not those islands be reached from airbases in China?).

As for whether greater attention to the Asian theater would have "delayed the Normandy landings"—perhaps, but perhaps not. Besides, a responsible termination of the war in Asia might well have saved the lives of approximately 100,000 Americans and millions of local people who subsequently perished in Korea and Vietnam, not to mention the millions who died in the Chinese civil war. Finally, to hold that the Communists might well have won the Chinese civil war even if the United States had been fighting on the ground in China in World War II is to miss the pivotal importance to the Communists of the destruction of the Nationalist armies by the Japanese.

Robert C. Whitten takes me to task for asserting that Roosevelt would never have placed the fleet in Pearl Harbor had he been expecting real war, and that the attack took the President by surprise. It is true that we had some information suggesting an attack, but it was not properly recognized—sound familiar? Although Roosevelt did "goad" the Japanese, as Mr. Whitten puts it, he did so with the sense that they would either have to accept sanctions or cease their aggression. This is very different from expecting them to attack.

Mr. Whitten also chides me for saying that fleet operations could not have

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been supported from Pearl Harbor. I stand by the point. Maintaining the Pacific fleet required direct access to all the resources of the continental United States, from heavy industry and shipyards, to petroleum, to food, to manpower. It is a nightmare to imagine how these could have been convoyed from the West Coast to Hawaii in wartime conditions, with Japanese submarines and surface combatants free to roam.

I will not venture to add to Rafael Medoff's assessment of Roosevelt's evident inaction with respect to the Nazi death camps, or wade into the deep waters of speculation about how attitudes toward Jews then widespread in America might have been a contributing factor to his inaction (though I would note that Eleanor Roosevelt clearly changed her feelings about Jews as she grew older). Instead, I tentatively second M. Donald Coleman's eloquent observation that "Something in [FDR's] heart was wrong, and that diminishes his place in *our* hearts."

Mr. Coleman writes, pointedly, that whereas I "cannot forgive Roosevelt for not leaving us a better world," nevertheless, "Some of us are grateful that he left us a world in which we are able to live." This brings us to perhaps the most difficult puzzle of all concerning Roosevelt's wartime role—namely, the fact that he did not, directly, leave us that world.

Even before war broke out in 1939, FDR knew that vital American interests were at stake. He also knew that he could not lead a divided country into massive conflict. So he did all he could to assist those resisting aggression—but without actually joining the battle. Our entry in December 1941 was not early—the world had long been in flames—and it happened only because the Japanese attacked us.

Suppose Tokyo had limited its war-making to Indochina, British Southeast Asia, and the Dutch East Indies. I doubt we would have gone to war with Japan. As far as Germany was concerned, it was only Hitler's subsequent declaration of war on *us* that permitted Roosevelt to enter the European theater. In short, had it not been for the miscalculations of Tokyo and Berlin, he might never have found a convincing occasion to join the conflict.

Of course, he was assuming that the occasion he needed would indeed turn up. In doing so, he was playing a politically astute but strategically hair-raising game—and one that he might have lost. That being the case, logic compels us to accept a repugnant conclusion: we have the Japanese and the Germans to thank for making the indispensable errors of judgment that alone brought the U.S. into the war and, in so doing, "left us a world in which we are able to live."

My thanks once again for these extremely interesting and thoughtful letters.

Becoming Jewish

To the Editor:

In her moving and earnest depiction of her conversion from Christianity ["On Joining the Jews," March], Nancy Yos identi-

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fies some of the key issues plaguing the Reform movement. She especially realizes that "social action is thin gruel to live on" and that a religious life requires something more substantive than "perfecting the world."

At the same time, she puts her finger on the essence of Jewish faith with her observation that "it should be obvious . . . that when a people possessed of a simple and sensible worldview are promised by God that they will exist forever, and they do, then Something is happening."

But it is a pity that such an honest and insightful person, through no fault of her own, was guided through a conversion process that is less than authentic according to halakha (Jewish law). She herself notes that the "Reform-style 'court'" that examined her was almost meaningless. And while her conversion ceremony on the temple's pulpit—in which she "promised to remain faithful and to raise the children as Jews"—was surely touching, the vagueness of her commitment is typical of Reform. What, if anything, was required of her went unmentioned. She was apparently unaware that halakha says nothing about conversion ceremonies on pulpits or about pledges of "remaining faithful." It requires from converts something more: unconditional acceptance and fulfillment of the Torah's commandments, among other things.

To her credit, Nancy Yos is clearly serious about her Jewishness and about raising her children as Jews. But how she can succeed in this, with a non-Jewish husband, is a serious question—though one that does not much concern Reform Judaism. Its temples are increasingly populated and even led by mixed-marriage couples—a sad fact that could in time transform "Something is happening" into "nothing is happening."

RABBI EMANUEL FELDMAN
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

How bittersweet it is to read the lyrical essay, "On Joining the Jews." Bitter because it is the essay I wanted to write to celebrate my conversion to Judaism; sweet because Nancy Yos does it so well that I wish now only to compare it with my own experience.

I have been Jewish for only some months now, but like Nancy Yos I know my journey began in childhood. I grew up in a Protestant family that belonged to the "liberal" church, which meant we were neither Catholics, Mormons, nor Baptists. My few Jewish friends seemed to me to be no more than members of some other denomination, and we talked about our differences as if we were supporting rival baseball teams.

I stayed in a mainline Protestant denomination, taught Sunday school, gave guest sermons, and became an elder. Yet three aspects of my intellectual life were unsatisfying. As a professor in the natural sciences, I study and teach evolution, which even in the most liberal Christian communities produces tension; some of the leaders of my church voiced anti-Israel positions with increasing venom; and I did not believe that God would become incarnate and then, in a Trinitarian mystery, allow himself to be brutally killed for our salvation. In fact, I knew I was Jewish, but I was comfortable in the back pews, hiding my doubts.

September 11, 2001 tore that comfort away. I looked to my church and my denomination to provide some way to approach the events of that day with ethics and courage, but I was gravely disappointed. Increasingly, criticism of Israel became indistinguishable from sophisticated anti-Semitism. Instead of boldness in the face of evil, I heard only

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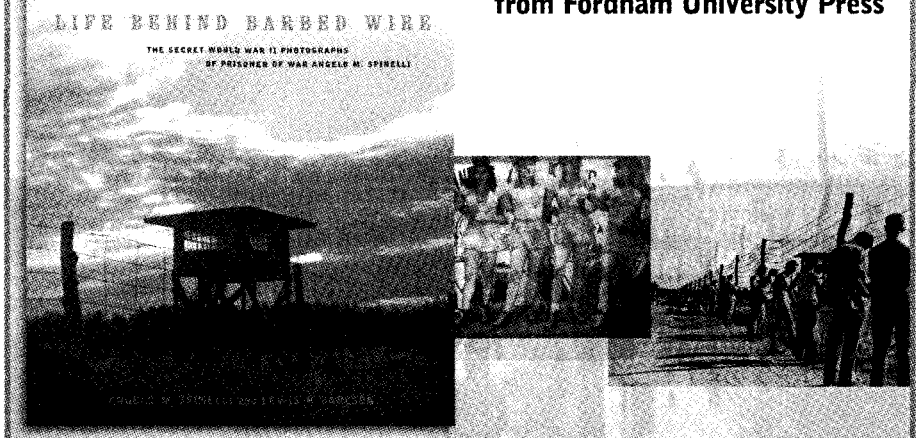

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platitudes about addressing the root causes of terrorism. One morning, I left a service just as it began, resolving to find a rabbi.

I found both a rabbi who is an extraordinary woman of the Reform movement and a congregation that has been welcoming and friendly from the first day I arrived as a sheepish middle-aged man seeking a spiritual home. Through them, I discovered Reconstructionist Judaism—a movement I have now joined.

So from a different direction and at a different age, I reached the same destination as Nancy Yos: I joined the Jewish people, and now I live the eternally-challenging Jewish life. I thank Nancy Yos for describing so well the richness of coming to that life.

MARK A. WILSON
College of Wooster
Wooster, Ohio

NANCY YOS writes:

In their kind letters, Rabbi Emanuel Feldman and Mark A. Wilson touch upon the prime points of the convert's dilemma as well as Judaism's dilemma in coping with converts. In particular, Rabbi Feldman notes the discrepancies between what halakha would have required of Mr. Wilson and me and the more "welcoming and friendly" process (as Mr. Wilson puts it) of pledging faith to Reform Judaism.

Judaism struggles under this half-blessing and half-curse of being extremely attractive to the outsider, at least during certain eras, while tending to be, by default, almost impossible to enter into properly. In this Christian country, there are thousands of converts to Judaism who have perforce rejected the Trinity—the core of Christianity. There may be thousands more, here and elsewhere, who would like to do something similar, perhaps passing beyond their own faiths' theologies to Judaism's simplicity and sense. They—we—may be attracted not only out of impatience with our own religions or clergy but because we can grasp in Judaism a kind of lightning bolt that forks out from our hands to touch all kinds of things that matter in a completely-lived life: a past in which God really interacted in a plausible way with human beings, a God Who quite rationally still tells us how to be good, a people who have a history of telling the unflattering truth about their experiences to the world and to God Himself and so are forever learning how to be more human. We want to be like that.

Rabbi Feldman's comments remind me forcefully of how the people and the law and the Master, all together in this system buzzing with electricity, whirl and buffet about in such a way as to make a stranger's entry tricky. He is right: one should not beg entry to the system and then ask to submit to laws lawlessly, and it is startling to find in the Reform movement that this is just what is encouraged; a modern Reform conversion, warm and moving as it is, can indeed feel "less than authentic."

But the individual insists on reaching God in the way of his choice. We are free, after all, to do so, just as we are free to suspect that the system of God, Torah, and Israel may never have been quite so closed and finished as Rabbi Feldman suggests. Two thousand years ago, Pharisee argued with Sadducee and Essene. A thousand years before that, King David's wife Michal kept an idol in her house. Not commendable things—but indicative of a spiritual messiness that the convert can find weirdly encouraging.

Besides, the alternative to a less-than-authentic conversion—especially in adulthood, when a non-Jewish family may already be established—would be to pass, as Mr. Wilson says, "sheepishly" through life pretending you have not heard what you have heard, and are not thinking what you are thinking. I wonder if Rabbi Feldman might be swayed by the idea that, God having made us as we are, it is wrong to fail to grasp the possibilities of pursuing Him, flawed though they may be, which He allows to flourish in the world. Is it not better to regard truth as a lightning bolt that must be taken hold of, however roughly and incompletely, than as a room with its doors closed?

Among us all—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, newcomers—we have created an impasse. There is no arguing with the fact that since Torah means law, then you should follow it. At the same time, there is no asking converts to relinquish the identity that they think they have made an exhausting and praiseworthy journey to get, even if they do not do half of what the law commands. Frankly, I wish that halakha could come up with some way to deal with proselytes who know they are insufficient Jews but who would have felt cut off from God if they had not tried to enter in some way.

The one thing that binds us together is a jealous passion for Jewish identity. We all want our identity intact and acknowledged. We want to be remembered as being in the fold. Perhaps the answer to our confusions and quarrels is to defer judgment for a while—say, 200 years or so—hoping for the day when the various streams of the faith unite and run clear again. In the meantime, we can congratulate ourselves on living in prophetic times, when "ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you'" (Zechariah 8:23).

New Fiction

TO THE EDITOR:

Yael Goldstein's story, "When Skeptics Die" [March], is wonderful—intellectually rich and emotionally gripping, with a lovely voice and a sharp eye for human detail. It is a great start to what I hope will be a brilliant career.

STEVEN PINKER
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Yael Goldstein's story is, in its construction, subtlety, and power, the closest thing I have seen to Henry James's masterpiece, "A Beast in the Jungle." He would have applauded her.

FREDERIC WILE
New York City

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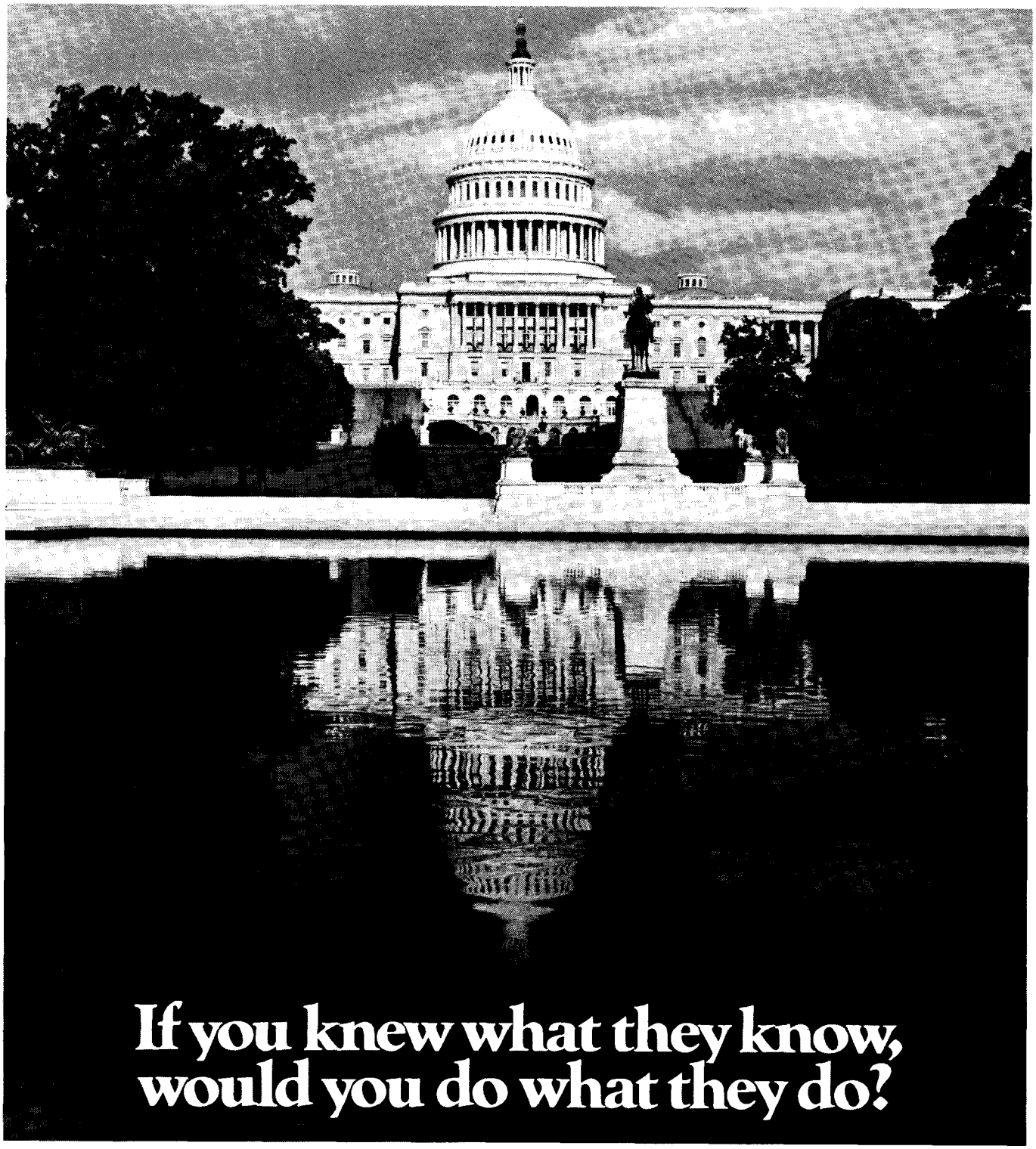

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Commentary
June 2004

Does Sharon Have a Plan?

Hillel Halkin

In the history of modern Palestine, "disengagement"—the name that has been given to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's momentarily stalled plan to withdraw all Israeli forces and inhabitants from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank—has more often been called "partition." It involves drawing borders and saying, "On this side Arabs, on this side Jews." In principle, there is nothing new about it.

Of the large number of partition plans for solving the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine, the earliest dates to 1937. This was the proposal of the Peel Commission, appointed by the British government following the outbreak of the Palestinian "Arab Revolt" of 1936, to divide Palestine west of the Jordan into two states, of which the Jewish one, located in the Galilee and Mediterranean coastal plain, would occupy 20 percent of the territory. After this plan was rejected outright by the Arabs, a second body, the 1938 Woodhead Commission, recommended scaling down even further the already small area of the Jewish state. Soon afterward, the British concluded that partition was impractical and issued their 1939 White Paper, calling for a gradual transition to a single, binational Palestinian state with no Jewish immigration and a permanent Arab majority.

Yet the logic of partition remained. In 1947, when the British Empire was breaking up, Jewish survivors of the Holocaust were clamoring for admission to Palestine, and Palestinian Arab and Jewish nationalism were at new heights of hostility, the United Nations General Assembly voted to create a Jewish state in slightly more than half of Mandate Palestine and an Arab state in the other half. Turned down again by the Arabs, this initiative too was never implemented. Instead, the 1948-49 Arab-Israeli war broke out, ending with partition on the ground and 77 percent of Palestine in Jewish hands. Most of the remaining 23 percent, now known as "the West Bank" of the Jordan River, was annexed to the kingdom of Jordan, with a strip of land around Gaza under Egyptian control.

Two decades later, the Six-Day war of June 1967 put an end to this division and reunited Palestine under Israeli rule. It also spawned new partition plans. There was the Arab plan for an Israeli withdrawal to the same 1949 armistice lines that the Arabs had refused to recognize before the war. There was the Allon plan, semi-officially held by Israel's Labor governments up until their electoral defeat in 1977, which envisaged Israeli annexation of the Jordan Valley and areas around Jerusalem and the return of most of the West Bank to the Jordanians. There was the Clinton-Barak plan of the year 2000, based on territorial exchanges between post-1967 Israel and a future Palestinian state. Irrespective of their details, all of these schemes, starting with the Peel Commission's, rested on the

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same premise—namely, that however strong the case for keeping Palestine one country, Arab-Jewish enmity and the radically different cultural and historical experiences of the two peoples made living together a practical impossibility.

Nevertheless, when viewed as the latest in a long series of partition plans, today's "disengagement" has some distinctive features. One is that it would be unilateral, carried out by Israel without Palestinian agreement. Another is that, since it would involve Israeli retention of parts of the West Bank, it would leave the Jewish state with upward of 80 percent of Palestine, a higher percentage than any of its predecessor plans. Still another is that, although it too has been rejected by the Palestinians and the Arab world, this partition plan is the first to have been supported on the Jewish side by the leader of the political Right—indeed, to have been conceived and initiated by him.

THERE IS an obvious reason why the Zionist Right has traditionally opposed partition, even as a majority on the Zionist Left has tended historically to favor it. The former, like political right wings everywhere, has by definition been ideologically nationalistic and taken a hard line on territorial issues. Whereas, both before and after the establishment of the state of Israel, the Left has refused to make the territorial integrity of "the land of Israel" a supreme political cause, the Right has consistently done just that.

Thus, for example, although the partition plan of the Peel Commission offered frightfully little territory to the proposed Jewish state, most of the Zionist Left, as represented by its two Palestinian and Diaspora leaders (David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann), favored accepting it as a basis for negotiation. At a time when any Jewish state, no matter how small, could rescue large numbers of desperate European Jews, even a disadvantageous partition, they thought, was better than nothing. (Nor did either of them rule out the possibility of territorial expansion in the future.)

The Right, on the other hand, opposed the Peel plan as strenuously as did the Arabs. "Our right to the whole of *Eretz-Israel*, undivided . . . supersedes [all practical] construction," wrote Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the head of the Revisionists, the main right-wing Zionist party of the Mandate period, in 1937. "Let not Gentile hands abuse our rights, but first and foremost, let not Jewish hands forfeit those rights which are eternal and indivisible. . . . Zion is all ours!"

A similar debate took place in 1947, when the Left, which controlled the political institutions of Jewish Palestine, accepted the UN partition plan while the Right, led by Menachem Begin and the paramilitary Irgun, fought it bitterly; between 1967 and 1977, when the governments of Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir, and Yitzhak Rabin pursued a policy, attacked by an opposition led by Begin, of "land for peace"; in 1978-79, when Begin, now in power as head of the Likud party, refused to surrender Israeli claims to the West Bank and Gaza in peace negotiations with Egypt at Camp David (he agreed to withdraw from all of Sinai only because Sinai was never considered part of Palestine); and in 1993-96 and 1998-2001, when Likud, out of power once more, denounced first the Oslo agreement and then the Camp David and Taba negotiations for their territorial concessions.

In a sense, indeed, the Left-Right debate over partition goes even farther back, to the period of Ottoman rule before World War I. Then, the issue was not territorial but economic. The Left, composed of socialist-Zionist immigrants who had arrived in Palestine in the early years of the 20th century, demanded a separate all-Jewish economy, with its own proletariat and class structure, from which Arab labor and joint Arab-Jewish capital would be excluded. The Right, whose main backers were the private farmers of the first Zionist agricultural settlements established in the late 19th century, favored economic integration, in part because these farmers employed Arab workers who were cheaper and more reliable than Jewish ones.

This difference remained significant in Left-Right politics until 1948, and in some ways even after 1967. In the years immediately following the Six-Day war, it was the right wing of the Labor party, led by Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres, that supported the building of settlements in all of the occupied territories, arguing that a "functional solution" would enable Arabs and Jews to share power there by virtue of their common economic interests. The party's left wing dismissed this as unrealistic.

The paradox, then, is this: the mainstream Zionist Left, though it spoke the language of human brotherhood, traditionally saw no room for large numbers of Arabs in a Jewish state. By contrast, the nationalistic Right believed a large Arab minority could be accommodated by the practical incentives that coexistence would provide. This was why, in the 1930's, when the Zionist Left toyed with the notion of a "transfer" of Palestine's Arabs to other Arab countries, one of the most vigorous opponents of the idea was Jabotinsky, who declared that a Jewish state would always have a large Arab pop-

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ulation, "and that is good enough for me, provided the Jews have the majority."

Historically, therefore, Sharon's disengagement plan was momentous, even if it was rejected by a resounding vote on May 2 in an internal Likud referendum that the prime minister and his advisers initially had hoped to win by a large margin. Although Likud's political history is complex—the party was founded after the 1973 Yom Kippur war by a merger (behind which Sharon was the driving force) of several right-of-center parties, and right-wing splinter groups have continued to drift in and out of it—at bottom it remains the direct descendant of the Revisionists. Its Tel Aviv headquarters are named for Jabotinsky, and a large portrait of him adorns party functions. Disengagement represents the abandonment of 75 years of Jabotinsky's policies on Palestine, and Likud voters have declared, at least for the moment, that they are not ready to follow Sharon in breaking with them.

Sharon was under no obligation to conduct a party referendum—or, for that matter, any referendum at all—before presenting his plan for approval to Israel's Knesset. Nor was a Likud ballot his first choice. He would have preferred a nationwide plebiscite, in which pro-disengagement sentiment would have been proportionally far stronger. He rejected that route only because, Israel having no precedent for such a procedure, it would have met with lengthy legal and parliamentary impediments.

Two considerations made Sharon want a popular vote of some kind. One was the strong opposition to disengagement within Likud's Knesset faction and central committee, which he hoped to squelch by a show of rank-and-file support. The other was the fate of Yitzhak Rabin and the Labor party following the 1993 Oslo accord. By trying to lead an evenly divided country into a fateful political process, Rabin had turned Israel against itself at a horrendous cost, not least of all to himself. Sharon was determined to avoid this mistake and to demonstrate, on a level more binding than that of public-opinion polls, that he had behind him a clear majority of Israelis, or—what would amount to the same thing—a narrower edge in his own traditionally anti-partition party.

His defeat in the Likud referendum was immediately attributed to various factors. They included, on the day of the balloting, the murder by Gaza Strip terrorists of a Jewish mother and her four daughters, which caused a hard-line reaction in many Likud voters; the overconfidence of supporters of the disengagement plan, which led to poor organization in the field; the refusal by senior Likud cabinet ministers to pitch in on Sharon's behalf, or do more than pay lip service to a plan they preferred not to be actively associated with; and the mobilization of a disciplined and well-financed settler movement, which, though most of its members vote for right-wing parties other than Likud, campaigned massively on behalf of a "No" vote.

All of these things played a role. And yet there was something else that was at least as crucial as any of them but that attracted much less comment—namely, the fact that the disengagement plan, as publicly outlined by the prime minister, did not make a great deal of sense.

On the face of it, indeed, Sharon's plan seemed highly illogical. In the first place, there was no congruence between it and the West Bank security fence that Israel is now building at enormous expense and under heavy international criticism.

True, in addition to the evacuation of nineteen settlements from the Gaza Strip, which has been surrounded by its own fence for years, Sharon spoke of evacuating four more small settlements in the northern West Bank. But once the West Bank fence is finished next year, dozens of other Jewish settlements, with tens of thousands of inhabitants, will be left on its eastern, Palestinian side. If these are allowed to remain there, they will need an army to defend them and Israel will go on straddling both sides of the fence, which will then serve only as an anti-terrorist barrier and not as the political and military border of a repartitioned Palestine. What, then, will disengagement have disengaged from? And why evacuate all settlements from Gaza when they too could be left on the other side of a fence until a solution were found for them and the West Bank settlements together?

Moreover, even while arguing for disengagement, Sharon went on declaring his support for the Bush administration's "road map," which calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. But under disengagement, even if the eventual borders were to be congruent with the West Bank security fence, Israel would end up with all of Palestinian Jerusalem and additional chunks of the West Bank. How would a Palestinian state, split between Gaza and the West Bank on less than 20 percent of the land area of the British Mandate, and deprived of its main commercial, cultural, and geographical hub, be viable? And how could an American government committed to such a state

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sincerely back disengagement, as it purported to do during Sharon's April visit to Washington, the claimed success of which was emphasized by Likud's pro-disengagement forces in appealing for a "Yes" vote?

These questions could not have escaped the nearly 100,0000 Likud members who went to the polls on May 2, many of whom voted "No" at least in part because they could not find the answers to them. They did not have to be territorial maximalists to be affected by the arguments against disengagement—its uprooting from Gaza of thousands of Jewish settlers, for example, many with children and grandchildren born there; or its inevitably being viewed as a triumph for Palestinian terror, whose perpetrators would take full credit for it; or its unilateral nature, which would permit the Palestinian forces in Gaza to go on fighting Israel by other means, switching from close-quarter attacks on Israeli soldiers and settlements to rocket and mortar bombardments on towns and villages in Israel proper. If, in addition to all this, disengagement was self-contradictory even on its own terms, how could one possibly vote for it?

WHAT THE average Likud voter understood, Ariel Sharon can be assumed to have understood as well. What then made him stake his political prestige, and possibly his political future, on something as nebulous and full of holes as disengagement?

One can dismiss as unsatisfactory some of the more Machiavellian explanations that have been given. It has been said, for instance, that disengagement was a ploy to make Sharon historically indispensable at a time when he was facing possible indictment for financial regularities, thus scaring away potential prosecutors from his case. Or that he himself had no clear sense of what his plan was meant to accomplish but was seeking to create an illusion of political momentum so as to reverse his slipping popularity in the polls. Or that, on the contrary, he had a very clear sense, which was to give up Gaza with its over one million Palestinians, thus lessening the diplomatic and demographic pressure on Israel, while retaining all of the West Bank. Or even that he was hoping all along that the plan would be rejected, having never meant it seriously in the first place.

Such theories are unworthy, less because of their cynicism (which Sharon, a politician who regularly practices tactical deception, has inspired a great deal of) than because they do not square with the facts—neither the facts of his long military and political career, in which he has consistently preferred bold if sometimes simplistic strategic conceptions to temporizing or muddling through, nor the facts of his present term of office. Thus, already a year ago, when his legal situation seemed less threatening and his popularity in the polls was still high, Sharon declared in the Knesset, in language never used before by a Likud leader, that Israel must cease ruling over millions of Palestinians and that the "occupation"—a word traditionally anathema to the Israeli Right when applied to the West Bank and Gaza Strip—had to stop. Disengagement, it would appear, was on his mind at least as far back as then.

It may have been there long before that. It is impossible to say just when Ariel Sharon began considering a unilateral withdrawal to lines of Israel's own choosing as a way of breaking out of the impasse with the Palestinians, an idea first seriously floated on the Israeli Left after the failure of the Taba talks of December 2000. He has never chosen to reveal when or how he made this decision. Most political analysts have attributed it to his conclusion, even after the massive Israeli anti-terror offensive of the spring of 2002, that Palestinian violence could not be quelled by force or diplomacy. But its origins may have been earlier. Soon after the outbreak of the current wave of Palestinian violence in September 2000, for example, he spoke—again uncharacteristically for a Likud leader—of the need for a "painful" solution involving "very large-scale compromises," a formula subsequently shortened by him to "painful compromises" and repeated with mantra-like frequency. Since he was then attacking as *too* large-scale the concessions that Ehud Barak was ready to make to the PLO, what compromises could he have been thinking of other than those that Israel would make unilaterally, with itself?

Even if the die, therefore, was cast only last autumn, when Sharon first announced his disengagement plan, he seems to have been seriously thinking about it for a long time. Since he is not known to be a careless planner, one is compelled to assume that there is more to disengagement than the inconsistencies that meet the eye. Everything we know about Ariel Sharon leads to the assumption that his own conception of disengagement must bear an internal logic that his outward presentation has lacked.

IN PRACTICE, this can mean only one thing. Sharon's ultimate intention must be to withdraw not only from the Gaza Strip but also, once construction of its security fence is finished sometime next year, from most of the West Bank; to

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evacuate all Jewish settlements beyond the fence; and to turn both it and the fence around Gaza into permanent military and political borders that will be relatively impermeable to suicide bombs and other terrorist attacks. Only such an intention, indeed, can explain the agonizingly long debates that have gone and continue to go into determining where the fence should run, months sometimes being consumed in deciding whether it should be moved this way or that so as to take in some settlement or strategic hilltop or exclude a Palestinian village or its fields. Nothing short of a permanent border could justify such painstaking deliberation.

There are two reasons why Sharon would have refrained so far from stating that this has been his plan. Since it could not in any case be fully implemented before the fence's completion, he would have wanted to use the time available to prepare the Israeli public for it gradually, and especially his own political camp—which, as last month's referendum demonstrated, cannot easily digest even a withdrawal from Gaza, let alone one from most of the West Bank. This may be why, in addition to the settlements in Gaza, he slated four small Jewish villages in Samaria for evacuation.

Of no importance in themselves, these villages had great symbolic value. Their function was to accustom Israelis, especially on the political Right, to the idea that West Bank settlements could be removed too. Once this was accepted, Sharon seems to have believed, it would be possible to proceed to a far more sweeping and far more controversial withdrawal that, had it been bared in advance, might have caused a premature public furor and a full-fledged revolt in Likud. Why insist on crossing bridges prematurely?

Sharon had Washington to take into consideration, too. Although there is no knowing what explicit or tacit understanding he reached there in April, it is hard to believe that President Bush and his staff were unaware of what Sharon's thinking was, or that at bottom it was incompatible with Palestinian statehood. Not just domestic Israeli politics but the administration's public commitment to that statehood, as well as to a negotiated Israeli-Palestinian settlement based on it, required the fiction that the West Bank fence was solely for security purposes. While sooner or later the fiction would have to be discarded by both sides, it was convenient to maintain it for as long as possible. Even if Sharon had wished to tell Israelis the truth now, his obligations to the United States would have ruled out doing so.

Disengagement was thus ridden with subterfuge. Politically and diplomatically, this was perhaps unavoidable. Yet for Likud members debating whether to support the plan in their referendum, it was confusing. And for the plan's opponents, ironically, the consequences of this subterfuge were to assist the airing of other charges of subterfuge that had nothing to do with the subterfuge actually taking place. *K'godel ha-hakirah, godel ha-akirah*, "The more investigations [of Sharon's finances], the more evacuations [of settlements]," went a popular anti-disengagement slogan in the run-up to the Likud vote. Accused of the wrong deceptions, Sharon could not defend himself by confessing to the right one.

Is disengagement, nevertheless, a proper policy for Israel to be pursuing? The answer is yes. Disengagement is proper because a unilateral partitioning of Palestine along the lines of the Gaza and West Bank security fences is Israel's best option for the future. Israel cannot swallow the Palestinians. It cannot drive them out. It cannot arrive at a peaceful settlement with them. All it can do is disengage itself from them.

It is not an ideal solution. A better one would have been a negotiated partition in which Israelis and Palestinians would live in two separate but friendly states within the geographical framework of one, mutually accessible country. But such an arrangement, if it was ever feasible, is so no longer. Four years of Palestinian terrorism, and the lawlessness of a Palestinian society that has come to be dominated by fanatically Israel-hating gunmen and religious groups, make it evident that a Palestinian state friendly to Israel is an impossibility in our time. And since Israelis have no particular interest in an unfriendly Palestinian state, it is enough for them to concentrate on being a Jewish state with militarily and demographically defensible borders while letting the Palestinians fend for themselves.

What the Palestinians will then do politically is an open question. But it is, indeed, time to reexamine the commonplace that the Palestinians need to have their own state, which has become such a shibboleth of contemporary intellectual and diplomatic discourse that even politicians and Middle East specialists sympathetic to Israel mouth it as an axiom. But why should it be axiomatic? Because all national and ethnic groups that want their own states and have struggled for them must get them, in the name of self-determination? If so, why is it not a commonplace that there should be a state of Tibet, a state of Southern Sudan, a Tamil state in Sri Lanka?

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And why is it an axiom in today's world that the Kurds should *not* have a state? Why, of all the peoples on earth who have not yet been granted the sovereignty they have fought for—the Chechnyans, the Uighurs of China, the Karens of Burma, the Mizos and Nagas of northeast India, the Ibo of Nigeria, the Western Saharans of Morocco, the Acehans of Indonesia, to name but a few—should the Palestinians alone be universally acknowledged as deserving of it? Is it perhaps because, having attained a degree of political independence that few other nonsovereign peoples have achieved, they have systematically wasted the opportunity by creating an authoritarian, corrupt, and anarchically violent political structure that has brought them and others nothing but misery?

If anything, there are far less compelling reasons for a Palestinian state than there are in the case of other peoples. Apart from the competence to manage one's own affairs, of which the Palestinians have so far demonstrated little, one important criterion for statehood must surely be the degree to which a people is different from its neighbors and needs the framework of sovereignty to protect that uniqueness. The Tibetans, for example, have their own special culture, language, and religion, which they will lose if they continue to be ruled by the Chinese; the Kurds have a culture and language unlike that of the Arabs; the Karens a language and religion different from that of the Burmese.

But the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza have none of these things. They are Muslims just like the Arabs of Jordan and Syria. They speak the same dialect of Arabic that is spoken in Jordan and Syria. They have the same family structure, customs, dress, foods, music, and social values that are found in Jordan and Syria. And they live in an environment whose physical landscape, flora, fauna, and climate are indistinguishable from much of Jordan and Syria. Moreover, they share a common border with the Arabs of Jordan and have strong kinship ties with them, there being hardly a West Bank family that does not have relatives there. If the international community expects the Tibetans to get along as part of China, the Kurds as part of Iraq, and the Karens as part of Burma, why, apart from kowtowing to Arab pressure, should the Palestinians not be expected to get along as part of Jordan?

After four years of being the target of unremitting Palestinian terror, Israel does not owe the Palestinians anything except the obligation to let them live their own lives, free of Israeli domination and control—or, conversely, to extend full citizenship and civil rights to the small number of them ending up on the Israeli side of a unilaterally determined border. Those on the other side can reunite with Jordan, to which the West Bank belonged from 1949 to 1967. (The Gaza Strip, too, could be linked to Jordan by means of a corridor.) They would certainly enjoy a more stable and prosperous life under the Jordanian government than they did under the PLO.

NEARLY 70 years after the Peel Commission's proposal, its premises remain valid: the Jews and Arabs of Palestine cannot live together and must split the country between them. There is no "fair" way of doing this. In 1937 it was the Arabs who had a chance to take four-fifths and refused. Now it is the Jews who have it. One could say that the Likud party, true to the heritage of Jabotinsky, has refused, too, were it not that it quite literally did not know what it was doing.

At the moment, the future of both Ariel Sharon and his disengagement plan remains unclear. Sharon gambled on Likud and lost badly, and the choices now facing him are difficult. But whichever way he moves, and even if he himself does not survive politically, disengagement will not only remain on the Israeli agenda, it will shed the cloak of concealment that has so far prevented an intelligent public discussion of it and be debated on its real merits. Once the West Bank security fence is in place, these will cry out in all their obviousness for the plan's adoption. If Ariel Sharon is not the man to see it through, someone else surely will.

—May 5, 2004

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Explaining the Bush Tax Cuts

Bruce Bartlett

In terms of domestic policy, no issue more clearly defines the presidency of George W. Bush than taxation. Among Democrats, it even exceeds Iraq as the issue that motivates their loathing. Thus, during the recent Democratic primaries, Senator Joseph Lieberman and Representative Richard Gephardt continued to support the invasion of Iraq despite strong opposition from the party's base. But *every* candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination supported repeal, in whole or in part, of the Bush tax cuts.

It is difficult to think of another period in American history when tax policy was so polarizing an issue. Ronald Reagan pushed a highly controversial cut through Congress during his first year in office, but then he raised taxes almost continuously throughout the balance of his presidency. His tax-reform legislation in 1986 received broad bipartisan support. Bill Clinton's 1993 increase was contentious but rather modest, and by 1997 he had joined congressional Republicans in support of the first major tax cut since 1981.

One reason Bush's tax-cutting has stoked such ire is that he has been so relentless about it. He pushed major legislation through Congress in each of his first three years in office. This alone is a remarkable political achievement, since large cuts have historically occurred only at widespread intervals. The Kennedy tax cut, rammed through Congress by Lyndon Johnson in 1964, was the first major reduction since the 1920's, and it was not until 1981 and then 1997 that taxes were again reduced significantly.

What is still lacking, however, is any clear explanation for Bush's single-mindedness on this issue. John F. Kennedy was motivated to cut taxes by the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes, which were at the pinnacle of their influence in the early 1960's, while Ronald Reagan was strongly influenced by supply-side economics and his desire to reduce the size of government. Bush, by contrast, cites no particular ideology or theory of economics to defend his tax policies. His speeches and statements on the subject consist of disparate arguments, seemingly assembled in an ad-hoc fashion. On tax policy (as on domestic issues in general), this White House seems to go out of its way to avoid serious analysis.

That is a problem, to be sure. But it does not mean that the Democratic critique of the Bush cuts is correct. Indeed, there is a clear and compelling logic to the President's reforms, even if the administration itself has failed to articulate it.

George W. Bush's initial tax proposal was put forward in late 1999, while he was locked in a struggle for the Republican nomination against Senator John McCain and the magazine publisher

Bruce Bartlett, *a new contributor, writes a syndicated column on economic affairs and is a senior fellow of the National Center for Policy Analysis.*

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Steve Forbes, a favorite of supply-siders whose principal campaign promise was to establish a flat tax. Forbes was able to draw upon the misgivings that many conservatives felt toward Bush because of his father's apostasy on the issue. Bush, Sr. had famously declared, "Read my lips, no new taxes" at the Republican convention in 1988, only to abandon his pledge once in office. As a result, many conservatives stayed at home on election day in 1992 or voted for Ross Perot, making possible Bill Clinton's victory.

There was nothing special about the big tax cut that candidate George W. Bush made the centerpiece of his campaign for the 2000 Republican nomination. Its real purpose seemed to be to allay concerns that he might follow in his father's footsteps and raise taxes. Consisting of recycled bits and pieces of previous Republican initiatives, the Bush proposal dropped the bottom income-tax rate from 15 to 10 percent and the top rate from 39.6 to 33 percent; it also increased the tax credit for children, reduced the so-called marriage penalty, and eliminated the estate tax (dubbed the "death tax").

An important backdrop to Bush's plan was the budgetary situation. When his proposal was advanced during the campaign, the economy and the stock market were close to the peak of the 1990's boom. Revenues were flooding into the treasury, and vast surpluses were anticipated far into the future. In June 1999, the federal Office of Management and Budget projected a cumulative surplus of almost $5 trillion by 2014.

Conservatives were wary of these predictions, fearing that surpluses would lead to massive new government spending. One goal of Bush's proposal was thus simply to take money out of the hands of Congress and give it back to the taxpayers. This was a version of the "starve-the-beast" theory, according to which the best way to reduce the size of government is, as Ronald Reagan liked to say, to take away its allowance. To Republicans worried about Bush's talk of "compassionate conservatism," which sounded suspiciously liberal (and potentially expensive), the tax plan shored up the candidate's credentials as a small-government conservative.

Unfortunately, the protracted election recount in 2000 threw a monkey wrench into policy-planning. Deprived of a normal transition period between the election and inauguration day, and hampered in the recruitment of key officials, the Bush people had to scramble to get a program together once in office. Consequently, rather than rethinking their campaign tax plan in light of changed circumstances—the economy was now on the brink of a recession, and much of the budget surplus had already vanished—they decided to stick with it unchanged.

Having been designed with very different circumstances in mind, the tax cut was now presented primarily as an anti-recession measure. In fact, the President began promoting the plan on Keynesian grounds—as a way to spark consumption and, he argued, economic expansion. But this made it more difficult for the administration to explain why it wanted to cut tax rates for the rich, who spend a smaller portion of their income than the poor, or to abolish the estate tax, which is paid only by the richest 2 percent of families. These were defensible policy actions—but not on Keynesian grounds. Indeed, if job creation, which had become the administration's mantra, were the principal goal, even supply-siders would have suggested alternative policies.

Nevertheless, Bush plowed ahead as if nothing had changed between the early days of his campaign and his first months in office. The administration's supplementary budget message to Congress in February 2001 offered just five pages on tax policy, most of them taken up with graphics. Eager to give Bush a victory with his first big legislative initiative—and to show their own power as, for the first time in 50 years, the party in control of the White House and both houses of Congress—Republicans on Capitol Hill asked few questions about the proposals. The cut was quickly passed, and the President signed it into law in June 2001.

There was one principal innovation in the final legislation: an immediate tax rebate that was, in effect, an advance on the following year's tax cut. This too was promoted as a way of pumping up spending and thereby stimulating growth. Although economists pointed out on the basis of both theory and experience that almost all of the rebate would likely be saved in the short run—a similar measure had been tried in 1975—the pressure to do "something" for the economy quickly won the day.*

THEN CAME the attacks of 9/11, which occurred just as the economy was struggling to recover from the recession that had begun early in the year. The result was negative growth of 1.3 percent

* Subsequent research by Joel Slemrod of the University of Michigan shows that the economists were right: the rebate added little to aggregate spending.

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in gross domestic product for the third quarter of 2001. Forced to put its longer-term tax plans on hold, the administration now tried to shore up the battered economy.

The President quickly proposed giving businesses a larger depreciation allowance for purchases of capital equipment. Since depreciation—that is, the estimated cost of "using up" buildings and machinery—is deducted from business earnings, a policy of allowing more of it will lower taxable income and leave more money for investment, which was viewed as the economy's principal weak spot. Despite the fact that the Senate was now under Democratic control (due to the switch of Vermont Senator James Jeffords from Republican to Independent), Congress delivered this second Bush tax cut with amazing speed, and it was signed into law in March 2002.

At this point, some in the administration—especially Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill—began to counsel tax restraint. The deterioration of the economy plus the additional spending required for homeland security had virtually wiped out projected budget surpluses. In January 2002, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that the cumulative surplus by 2011 would be $1.6 trillion rather than the $5.6 trillion projected a year earlier.

Although the recession ended officially in November 2001 and growth rebounded in 2002, unemployment continued to rise. By midyear, Glenn Hubbard (chairman of Bush's Council of Economic Advisers) and Lawrence Lindsay (director of Bush's National Economic Council) were pressing for yet another big tax cut. O'Neill, however, had concluded that at this point the economy was recovering well enough without further stimulus, and he considered the budget deficit a more pressing problem. In August of that year, the CBO revised the long-term fiscal picture yet again, projecting deficits through 2005 and a total surplus of just $1 trillion through 2012.

O'Neill was fired for his recalcitrance in December 2002; Lindsay was let go as well, apparently not because he disagreed with the tax program but for poor managerial skills. This left Glenn Hubbard alone among Bush's top economic aides. Hubbard quickly pressed for eliminating taxes on stock dividends as a step toward abolishing the double levy on corporate profits, which are taxed once at the corporate level and a second time through the individual income taxes paid by shareholders. Reducing taxes on dividends would have the added advantage, Hubbard argued, of responding to concerns raised by the collapse of Enron and the ensuing Wall Street scandals, which were caused in part by excessively aggressive efforts by a number of companies to reduce their tax burden. Forcing firms to pay out more of their profits in dividends would also make it harder for them to give obscenely large—and increasingly controversial—pay packages to their top managers.

At the beginning of 2003, Bush announced his third major tax proposal. In addition to eliminating the double tax on stock dividends, this included an acceleration of some previously enacted cuts and the permanent establishment of others that were scheduled to expire. But this time, Congress did not act with dispatch. Owing mainly to concerns about the deficit, action in the Senate was protracted. Still, the administration got most of what it asked for. Although the tax on dividends was not eliminated, the top rate was reduced to just 15 percent. President Bush signed the tax cut into law in May 2003.

BECAUSE THE administration has offered no coherent rationale for its tax policies, critics have been able to charge that these policies have been driven principally by a desire to reward the President's wealthy supporters and to deprive the federal government of resources. Others blame the tax cuts for our mounting deficits and point to a fiscal train wreck ahead.

The "starve-the-beast" argument is easily dismissed. Unlike Ronald Reagan, who did use tax cuts to force reductions in spending, George W. Bush has made no effort at all to restrain the growth of federal outlays. He has vetoed not a single spending bill, no matter how pork-laden. To the contrary, he has initiated the largest new social program in decades by adding an expensive prescription-drug benefit to Medicare. Within a few years, the new program is expected to increase Medicare spending, already widely viewed as out of control, by one third.

As for the deficit, independent analyses by the CBO and others have consistently shown that the tax cuts are responsible only for about a third of the deterioration in the surplus since 2000. The recession accounts for the bulk of it. Liberal critics, such as the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, balloon this percentage by ignoring the stimulative effect of the tax cuts, assuming that pre-recession revenues would have been collected in the absence of the tax cuts, and treating proposed future tax cuts as if they were part of current law.

Others argue that, irrespective of what causes

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them, future deficits will negate any positive effects of the tax cuts. But these analyses assume that deficits will have a large impact on interest rates because of increased government borrowing—an assumption that is not justified by experience. In recent years, interest rates have risen as deficits have fallen and fallen as deficits have risen. The truth is that interest rates are determined by so many different factors—Federal Reserve policy, expected inflation, foreign purchases of Treasury bonds—that it is absurd to think that the deficit is the overriding influence.

The question of fairness is harder to answer, but not for the reasons assumed by the critics. The fundamental problem is that, over the years, we have virtually eliminated income taxes for anyone who could remotely be considered poor and for much of the middle class as well. According to a recent study by Congress's Joint Committee on Taxation, 40 percent of all federal income-tax returns now report no tax liability at all. Indeed, because of refunds under programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), scarcely anyone with an income below $30,000 pays federal income taxes, and many receive checks from the government in lieu of payments.

As a consequence, a huge percentage of the federal income tax is now paid by the wealthy. According to the Internal Revenue Service, in the year 2000 (the latest for which figures are available), more than 37 percent of all federal income taxes were paid by just the top 1 percent of taxpayers, namely, those with adjusted gross incomes above $313,000. More than half of all federal income taxes were paid by the top 10 percent of earners (those with adjusted gross incomes over $92,000), and 94 percent were paid by the top half of earners. The bottom 50 percent of taxpayers paid just 6 percent of all federal income taxes.

Liberals often criticize these data for excluding the Social Security payroll tax. But including the payroll tax does not change the basic picture. According to an IRS study, the top 20 percent of taxpayers paid more than two-thirds of the combined income- and payroll-tax burden in 1999. Moreover, liberals often conveniently forget that the EITC was made refundable precisely in order to offset the payroll tax for low-income workers.

With the tax burden skewed so heavily toward the rich, it is simply impossible to reduce that burden in a way that is not similarly skewed toward the rich. If the Bush cuts appear unfair to some people, that is because they imagine the government mailing large checks to people who are already wealthy. But there is a world of difference between receiving an actual government handout and being allowed to keep more of one's own income.

In any case, even the large cuts of 2001 and 2003 did little to change the basic distribution of taxation. According to an IRS study, if one compares these recent cuts with the 1999 tax distribution, they reduce only fractionally—from 68.17 to 67.47 percent—the share of total income and payroll taxes paid by the top 20 percent of earners.*

IT IS hard to know what direction tax policy would have taken in the absence of the attacks of September 11, 2001. Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill was keen on the idea of fundamental tax reform; it was one area where he saw eye-to-eye with the other key members of the Bush economic team. Like a number of Republican reformers since the mid-1970's, O'Neill wanted to see the U.S. move toward a consumption-based tax system with a flatter rate structure. Under a classic system of this kind, no taxes at all would fall on saving or investment; levies would fall instead on consumer spending, through sales or value-added taxes.

But a consumption-based tax system can also be brought into being more indirectly, without replacing the existing income tax. To do so, it is only necessary to eliminate taxes on capital, as we do already with IRA's and 401(k) accounts. If this were done systematically, we would be left at the end of the day with a consumption tax. The reason is simple. There are only two things that can be done with income: it must be either saved or consumed. Absent a tax on saving or investment, the full burden of taxation must logically fall on consumption.

Secretary O'Neill wanted to start the process by eliminating the corporate income tax. Virtually all tax theorists, from Milton Friedman on the Right to Lester Thurow on the Left, have decried this tax for years, on the grounds that, as we have seen, it taxes the same income twice. In a sole proprietorship or partnership, by contrast, profits are taxed only once—an arrangement that most economists consider rational and productive.

To its credit, the Bush administration has made some progress toward a flat-rate consumption tax.

* According to the Congressional Budget Office, the effective *rate* of taxation—taxes as a share of income—has risen slightly over time for those with high incomes while falling dramatically for those with low incomes. In 1984, those in the top 20 percent of households paid 24.3 percent of their income in combined federal income and payroll taxes; in 2001, they paid 26.8 percent. By contrast, those in the bottom quintile saw their effective tax rate fall from 10.2 percent to 5.4 percent.

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Statutory rates have been cut across the board, with substantial reductions in assessments on capital gains and dividends; the estate tax is being phased out of existence; and depreciation allowances are now close to equaling a full and immediate deduction for capital investments (the economists' term for this is "expensing"). A further step would be to allow greater tax-free savings by individuals, a measure the administration has proposed but has not pressed.

If the return on savings were indeed made tax-free, Americans would save a good deal more. Today, most people do not have nearly enough money set aside for a comfortable retirement, especially given increasing life spans. And the nation as a whole does not save enough to finance domestic investment, as is shown by our ongoing reliance on large inflows of foreign capital. In the long run, more domestic saving leads to more domestic investment, which in turn increases productivity and raises the standard of living.

A more complete consumption-based tax system would also lead to significant simplification. Among the most complex features of the current tax code are those related to capital gains and losses. In theory, a consumption-based tax system would sweep all of this away, giving people a postcard-sized form to fill out. Not only would it save millions of hours per year now spent filling out tax forms, but it would rationalize investment and eliminate the demand for wasteful tax shelters and the like.

THE GREAT mystery is why the President has failed so conspicuously in setting out the rationale for such a tax system. When questioned about this, administration officials have said that they are guided by what will work to gain support at a given moment—that is, by political expediency. There is nothing necessarily wrong with such a laundry-list approach to achieving desirable ends, but in this case it has made the goals of the White House unclear even to many of its supporters.

Whether this intellectual disarray will cost Bush in the 2004 election remains to be seen. John Kerry is already hammering away at the administration's record on taxes, and his views may well gain political traction as a result of continued slow employment growth and the furor over the "outsourcing" of jobs to foreign countries. One can only hope that political necessity will force the President to do what he should have been doing all along: explaining to the country how a simpler, more growth-oriented tax system stands to benefit all Americans.

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Do We Have Enough Troops in Iraq?

Victor Davis Hanson

How many American troops should be posted in Iraq, beyond the present spike of 135,000—a number that was itself raised from the informally agreed-upon level of 115,000?

This question of numbers leapt sharply to the fore in April, on account of the sudden toll being taken on American forces confronting insurrections in Falluja and Najaf. But the ferocity of renewed battle was not the only impetus behind the controversy, which indeed had been simmering from the very start of our campaign in Iraq, if not before. There was, for instance, the ongoing debate over Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's sweeping reforms of the U.S. military, and their immediate ramifications for peacekeeping operations around the world.

Still, the fatalities at Falluja, along with the announcement in March that the new government of Spain was withdrawing its contingent from Iraq, and the partisan charges and countercharges swirling about this year's American presidential campaign, helped to push the issue of troop numbers to the front of public consciousness. Even after our Marines pulled back at Falluja in late April, transferring some fighting authority to Iraqi forces, the question continued to linger in the air. The reason is plain enough. Willy-nilly, the issue of troop strength is inextricably tied to a still larger and even more controverted issue—namely, the success or possible failure of the American mission itself.

In no time, it seems, a critical consensus has formed on the matter of numbers, embracing Senate Democrats, media talking heads, editorial boards from the *New York Times* to *USA Today*, and even some well-known conservatives. The line goes roughly like this. The new American military—lighter, faster, more flexible—has proved that it can take out almost any rogue regime (the Taliban in Afghanistan, Saddam Hussein in Iraq) with ease. But it lacks either the skill or the will, or both, to ensure that such rapid victories will not, in the ensuing postwar chaos, transmogrify into a Vietnam-like quagmire or a Lebanon-like debacle. Only much larger numbers on the ground (the argument continues) can prevent opportunistic criminal gangs, terrorists, and religious extremists from intimidating nascent democrats and causing us in the end to leave things as bad as when we first arrived.

In Iraq, according to the critics, the one-time target number of 105,000-115,000 American occupation troops has been too small to secure the safety or help bring about the democratization of an uneasy

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populace of some 26 million. Nor will the need for a larger contingent abate with the shifting of authority to an interim Iraqi government at the end of June. Therefore, anywhere from 20,000 to 60,000 more American soldiers should be sent as quickly as possible, to reach an optimum force roughly comparable to the number of ground forces that won the war in the first place.

A variety of specific concerns have been adduced in support of this conclusion. Critics have pointed to the presence in Iraq of about 15,000 armed "contractors," or private security guards, as evidence that uniformed American troops are stretched too thin to provide basic protection. They have cited the hardship imposed by the military's need to postpone the scheduled return home of both regular and National Guard units, whose tours of duty have been extended repeatedly. They have noted the apparently dwindling contribution to overall force levels being made by other members of the original coalition. And they have reminded us of the often questionable loyalty to the new government of the shaky 200,000-man Iraqi security force, many of whose "soldiers" fled the scene of battle at Falluja at the first opportunity.

The usual villain in the critics' indictment has been Rumsfeld. If military planners as a species are too often guilty of rehashing the last war, Rumsfeld has purportedly been too eager to fight the next one, obsessed with the enemies we will be facing in 2050 rather than those who have been killing us in 2004. At a time of soaring budget deficits, coupled with the need for expensive new weapons systems—from air-refueling tankers to missile defense—Rumsfeld, charge the critics, has been criminally reluctant to reconstitute two or three more old-fashioned, $3-billion-a-year Army divisions of the type now situated outside some of Iraq's most populous cities, relying instead on small pockets of counterinsurgency troops aided when necessary by precision air power and some armor. The *Weekly Standard*, no beacon of liberal hand-wringing, has taken particular umbrage at Rumsfeld's stubbornness on this issue: "If [the] current Secretary of Defense cannot make the adjustments that are necessary," the *Standard* editorialized a while ago, "the President should find one who will."

Others have looked elsewhere for culprits. For them, the real blame has attached to the White House, and especially to its cynical subordination of military considerations to partisan political ones. In this view, a Karl Rove or Karen Hughes has lurked in the logistical shadows, issuing election-year warnings about "mission creep" and conjuring up nightmarish memories of the soon-to-be-lame-duck Lyndon Johnson, whose steady incremental reinforcements in Vietnam finally reached the 500,000-plus mark and, even so, left Gen. William Westmoreland complaining that he was shorthanded. The Bush politicos are said to fear that any increase in troops would be seized upon by the liberal media as still further evidence that we have entered an Iraqi swamp, putting ever larger numbers of Americans in the line of fire from all sides with no end in sight. In an odd juxtaposition, even as some newspapers this spring were calling for additional manpower on their editorial pages, they were running cartoons and opinion pieces warning that such demands were themselves proof that we had found ourselves back in 1965.

The critics' concerns, if not the conclusions drawn from them, have in many cases been sound and legitimate. One factor making it difficult to adjudicate today's argument over the proper number of soldiers needed in Iraq is that historically it has been the generals and official military planners, not their critics in the media, who have complained most vocally to civilian sounding-boards of too few troops. Manpower levees are like taxes, and the government that says it requires more of either of them can always find a self-fulfilling reason for the need. Today's reversal of roles may be one reason why the debate, such as it is, has taken place only between those who think we need greater numbers and others who assure us that we can make do with what we have. Scarcely anyone has advanced a contrary but, as we shall see, arguably stronger claim: namely, that 180,000 soldiers—or why not 300,000?—might even be *deleterious* to our efforts.

One standard reply to the critics, sometimes invoked by defenders of the administration, has begun by pointing to our responsibilities elsewhere. In theory, the United States is supposed to be able to fight two full-fledged conflicts simultaneously. This is not an idle concern: second wars, or second fronts in wider wars, are more likely to break out after a first war has begun—the Nazis declared themselves to be at war with us only after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and the Soviets often felt freer to probe in Europe and the Middle East when they became assured we were fully committed in Korea or Vietnam. Thus, an America whose troops were tied down in the Middle East would by definition be more vulnerable in East Asia, the Balkans, or Central America.

If, moreover, we were to increase the number of ground troops in Iraq to 180,000, the reinforce-

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ments needed immediately would have to come out of the at-risk theaters of southern Europe, Japan, or Korea. Such redeployments, however justified by the need in Iraq, would impinge upon fundamental bilateral relationships with major allies, and could not be undertaken lightly. Interestingly, very few of those who insist on more manpower in Iraq have seemed ready to take the next logical step and demand that the requisite numbers be removed summarily from Europe or Asia.

As for private civilian guards, we should not assume that their presence has necessarily been a sign of too few troops—any more than the presence of millions of security guards in the United States proves that there are too few police. Private consortia make their own judgments about their security needs, and will always have requirements that cannot be addressed by soldiers alone. The exact aggregate number of American, foreign, and Iraqi civilian contractors is not known; in some cases, the Pentagon itself has outsourced responsibilities to private concerns, which suggests that many of their personnel, some of whom are retired from the military, could be considered part of the overall security apparatus of the occupation.

But these arguments, though cogent enough, do not go to the heart of the case against the critics. To put it in a nutshell: although numbers are important, the mere size of a military force is not always commensurate with its ability either to beat an enemy or to keep the peace.

Alexander the Great, who never led an army numbering more than 50,000 men, defeated hordes five times that size in battle, and consolidated his victories with forces that were likewise vastly outnumbered. Julius Caesar conquered and held much of Western Europe with legions that numbered fewer than 40,000. The British defeated both Cetchewayo and the Great Mahdi with a few thousand redcoats, and held Zululand and the Sudan under control in the aftermath of victory. The British army's campaign to crush the 1920 Iraqi revolt, undertaken with just a few thousand troops, is now described in pessimistic terms by critics as having taken "three long months"; the true wonder was its economy and brevity.

Much the same as the story of warfare is the story of occupation. Rome administered an empire of some 50 million people stretching over a million square miles with rarely more than 250,000 legionaries. India's many millions were occupied by many fewer than a million of the Queen's soldiers. After World War II, Italy, Japan, Germany, and their territories together represented nearly 200 million occupied peoples; by 1947, the Allied armies exercising control over them amounted to a few hundred thousand. At one time, vast tracts of Sinai, the Golan, and the West Bank were secured by a few thousand Israeli soldiers.

Finally, what goes for soldiers applies to civilian personnel as well. The Coalition Provisional Authority has lately had about 1,300 civilians working for it—too few, it has been said, since MacArthur had four to five times that number in postwar Tokyo. Along similar lines, a recent RAND study suggested that twenty security personnel (presumably including Iraqis as well as others) were needed per 1,000 people to ensure residents the confidence to resume normal life—which works out to a figure of about 500,000 for the whole country. But that wooden formula does not take into account the fact that Kurdistan in the north has been almost violence-free, while millions of other Iraqis outside the Sunni Triangle and Shiite strongholds in the south have been mostly quiet. Moreover, unlike postwar Japan, Iraq is not in ruins; in a year's time, it saw its power, water, and oil production rise to prewar levels or above.*

IF NUMBERS are not the only factors conducive either to military victory or to successful occupation, the question becomes one of how our present forces have been used. Here a general rule seems inescapable: defeating—even humiliating—an enemy decisively and then immediately establishing zero tolerance for the formation of militias and insurrectionists is a wiser strategy than stationing a vast and often static occupation force over an opponent who does not believe he was defeated in the first place.

In this regard, we got off to an unfortunate start in the last days of the war. Worried about inflicting excessive damage on a tottering enemy in front of a worldwide television audience, we employed nonexplosive GPS bombs, passed over retreating units of the Republican Guard, and avoided hitting infrastructure.† Such magnanimity and caution in the midst of a deadly conflict, while admirable and understandable, may in hindsight have sent the wrong message first to looters, who made free with

* Comparisons of Iraq with occupied Germany and Japan are fallacious for another reason: almost immediately, Allied troops in those countries had to worry about, and protect against, the possibility of foreign invasion from Communist Russia or China—a much greater threat than domestic unrest.

† Even before the war, according to Bob Woodward in *Plan of Attack*, members of the Agency for International Development as well as various UN agencies and non-governmental organizations had contributed to a list of several thousand targets that were to be off-limits to U.S. military planners.

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the infrastructure we spared, then to nascent private militias, and finally to entire cadres of resistance in Falluja and Najaf—the message, that is, that U.S. forces, overly circumspect in war, would not in its aftermath put down those who could and should be put down.

During the spring 2003 campaign, tens of thousands of Baathists tore off their Republican Guard uniforms in the face of artillery barrages, 2,000-pound bombs, and Abrams tank fire, and ran home. Shamed by this experience, subsequently unemployed because of the purification of Baathists, and exasperated by the derision heaped upon them on al-Jazeera television and elsewhere in the Arab world, many of these same runaways were elated to discover that it was one thing to shoot at Americans in broad daylight during war but quite another to implant by night an improvised explosive device on the route of a peacekeeping convoy. The former could earn you death or shame, the latter might well win honor without loss of limb.

From the American point of view, the lesson of this paradoxical moral calculus should have been that our restraint could earn us contempt rather than the gratitude we expected. Following the same line of thought, one might well have concluded in more recent circumstances that the more Americans withheld their overwhelming firepower to parley with insurrectionists, out of worry over greater uprisings or in fear of cultural or religious transgression, the more likely the enemy was to become emboldened—and thus the more likely it would be that we would indeed need far more troops to encircle far more Fallujas. To the critics, not having enough troops earned us one Falluja, to which they proposed more troops as the remedy; but the graver sin might have been our failure to use immediately and forcefully the powerfully equipped troops we already had on hand.

Thucydides did not believe the Athenian disaster at Syracuse was necessarily caused by the smallish armada sent over by imperial Athens—in all, 40,000 sailors and soldiers to conquer the entire island of Sicily and a city (Syracuse) larger than Athens itself. Rather, it was a result of Athenian indecision and inaction on arrival, which led to delay and confusion. The Athenians had established an unfortunate precedent: tens of thousands of their soldiers would not aggressively attack the enemy once they realized they had a real war on their hands rather than the walkover many had anticipated. That inaction convinced even more tens of thousands of uncommitted Sicilians that it was wiser to stay neutral, or perhaps join the Syracusans, than to throw in their lot with an Athenian expeditionary force that for nearly a year had not moved successfully on the city and might well soon abandon the effort.

One could multiply such examples. In this country, the Union dilemma through much of 1862-3 was not one of inferior numbers—quite the contrary—but of forces whose numerical advantage was nullified through passivity and ineptness. In stark contrast, by late 1864 William Tecumseh Sherman, with no more than 65,000 troops, had sliced through the middle of Georgia, its one million residents unwilling to oppose an audacious commander hell-bent on teaching them a lesson. A hundred years later, South Vietnam may well have been more stable in 1972—without the presence of 500,000 U.S. troops—than in 1967, precisely because by 1972 American bombing had at last begun to target strategically valuable assets in the North and was thus doing greater damage to the Communist hierarchy in Hanoi than all the costly and manpower-intensive search-and-destroy missions in the South.

A long line of American generals from Ulysses S. Grant to George S. Patton warned of the loss of morale and the decay in battle-readiness that accrue from perennial garrisoning and holding off from attack. Outside Falluja in April, there were abundant signs of restlessness among our troops, who wished nothing but to go after and defeat an enemy foolish enough to engage at last in an open firefight. Over the previous months, too, what had been killing our fighters was not periods of open warfare, when they were free to crush opponents without restraint, but phony one-sided armistices in which, as peacekeepers, they formed easy targets in convoys and patrols, always shooting back rather than first. Calls for more American troops during those depressing weeks at Falluja may have suggested, however wrongly, that this was an occupier running scared, hoping to achieve by means of a show of superior materiel or manpower what he was unwilling—although ironically quite able—to achieve by fighting.

At issue is not only military efficacy in the narrow sense. The greater the number of troops deployed, the greater the expectations placed upon them and the more pressing the demands at home for immediate results. Contributing mightily to the Italian debacle in North Africa in 1941-2, when many units fled from British armored columns, was the fact that Mussolini had sent nearly a half-million troops who were unsure of their precise combat mission, but from whom great miracles were nevertheless expected. Their numerical superiority over the British—at one

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early point, as high as ten to one—ensured that their defeat would be seen at home as especially disastrous.

The question of troop levels is also bound up with the issue of dependency, especially under conditions of occupation and/or nation-building. The more U.S. troops we were to pour into Iraq, the more the Iraqis would end up relying on the aegis of American power. No Iraqi general would be able to strut on television and tell the world's reporters that his men had crushed the enemy—and, just as bad if not worse, none could be called to account for allowing a ragtag insurrectionist militia to rout a trained battalion. Robbed of any of the prestige of victory, the Iraqi military would also be excused from any blame attached to "our" setbacks.

Other damaging consequences can follow from too overwhelming a presence. In Vietnam between 1965 and 1969, a half-million support troops were finally necessary to ensure that about 50,000 ground combatants were in the field each day; jokes about the size of the American telephone directory in Saigon were legion. Even in today's leaner and more professional army, each additional American soldier probably requires at least one or two additional support personnel. That means bigger base camps, which means more convoys, which means more large, well fed, and obtrusive Americans on the streets of Baghdad—ubiquitous Big Brothers in boots, Kevlar, and desert camouflage. Is this what we want: a *higher* profile?

ACCORDING TO popular accounts, the Pentagon had initially planned for a war in Iraq lasting between 125 and 225 days—a reasonable estimate, given the magnitude of the task of not only defeating but extinguishing Saddam Hussein's regime. The unexpected difficulties of the peace must therefore be juxtaposed to the unforeseen ease and quickness of the war. By any historical measure, and despite the tragic cost in lives, a year-long struggle that has slowly been establishing something much better than what was there before remains an impressive and humane achievement.

Nor have our recent difficulties in the field amounted to a referendum on our larger and hugely ambitious notion of implanting consensual government in Iraq. The verdict has yet to be delivered on that vast enterprise, although it may well prove that what has fueled resentment so far has been too little public Iraqi involvement and the delayed transition to legitimate local governance. Having advertised our campaign as one of liberation and democratic reform, we raised expectations that can only be met with rapid fulfillment of our promise.

That having been said, there remains the crucial role of military power in either advancing or foiling our political goals. None of us knows the exact number of troops that should now be stationed in Iraq. Should Iraqization fail, should insurgency increase, we might well end up needing more soldiers, in part because of our own past hesitancy to act promptly and forcefully against incipient insurrection. But lost in the present argument is the lesson of history: small armies, well-led and with established reputations for unpredictability and ferocity, can not only defeat numerically superior militaries but then impress quite large populations and occupy vast territories. Their relatively small size and finite presence can also help to convince interim governments that speed is of the essence in creating a highly visible, indigenous army and using it to put down insurrectionists—with obvious dividends for both public perceptions and the orderly transfer of responsibility for governance.

In short, our military problem has been not that Donald Rumsfeld has been fighting wars with too few troops and then being too stingy in allotting occupation forces. Rather, our concern with restraining the vast power of those already in the field has repeatedly put us at risk of creating self-fulfilling prophecies. We have seen a Gulf War I and now a Gulf War II. Gulf War III will surely be on the horizon if, failing to learn the lessons of the last two victories, we once again remove the stakes from the hearts of seemingly defeated and moribund killers.

By contrast, if we use the present 130,000 American troops decisively, leave our record of victories as a legacy to the new consensual government scheduled to assume responsibility this summer, and agree in the long term to offer a stand-by constabulary reserve force of 30,000-40,000 troops backed by airpower unafraid to target bases and depots even beyond the Iraqi border, there is a good chance that the aggregate number of U.S. soldiers in the region need be no more than what it was before the first Gulf war and the rise of Saddam Hussein as a threat to regional stability.

This is not a parlor calculation. The fate of hundreds of American soldiers in the next few months hinges not on how many we send, but on how they are used. There is a logic, and there are clear historical precedents, to whichever alternative we choose, and the choice is ours alone to make.

—May 5, 2004

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The Cathedral and the Cube: Reflections on European Morale

George Weigel

At the far western end of the magnificent urban axis that runs from the Louvre down the Champs Elysées and through the Arc de Triomphe, crossing the Seine at the Pont de Neuilly, is the Grand Arch of La Défense—one of the "great projects" of the late French president François Mitterrand. Designed by Johann Otto von Spreckelsen, a Danish architect of sternly modernist sensibility, La Grande Arche is a colossal open cube: almost forty stories tall, 348 feet wide, faced in glass and in 2.47 acres of white Carrara marble.

On a hot, sunny afternoon—which is when I first saw it some seven years ago—La Grande Arche is, quite literally, dazzling. An elevator, definitely not recommended for anyone inclined to vertigo, whisks the visitor up to a rooftop terrace, which offers an unparalleled view of Paris, past the Tuileries to the Louvre and on to the Ile de la Cité, Sante Chapelle, and Notre-Dame.

The arch's three-story-high roof also houses the International Foundation for Human Rights. For Mitterrand intended the Grand Arch as a human-rights monument, something suitably gigantic to mark the bicentenary of the French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. Thus, in one guidebook I consulted, La Grande Arche was nicknamed "Fraternity Arch"; also noted, as in every other guidebook I looked at, was the fact that within its space the entire cathedral of Notre-Dame, including towers and spire, would fit comfortably.

This prompted a question as I walked along the terrace admiring one of the greatest of the world's cityscapes. Which culture, I wondered, would better protect human rights and secure the moral foundations of democracy: the culture that built this stunning, rational, angular, geometrically precise but essentially featureless cube, or the culture that produced the vaulting and bosses, the gargoyles and flying buttresses, the nooks and crannies, the asymmetries and holy "unsameness" of Notre-Dame and the other great gothic cathedrals of France?

Over the past year and a half, the same question has come back to haunt me time and again. I thought about it when so much of Western Europe's political leadership opposed the liberation of Iraq—in the French case, out of a particularly disturbing combination of avarice, *folie de grandeur*, and anti-Americanism; when I read the astonishing poll, commissioned by the European Commission, which revealed a majority of Europeans to be of the view that Israel and the United States were the world's greatest threats to peace; when, following the terrible events in Madrid on March 11 of this year, Spain's democratic electorate in effect recused itself, pleading only to be left alone by the forces of international terror; and especially as I followed the debate over whether

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the preamble to the proposed new European constitution should acknowledge the Christian sources of European culture.

These phenomena are related, and understanding them requires something more than a conventional analysis of Europe's power-deficit as measured against the United States. Political answers alone cannot explain Europe's current political crankiness, whether over the processes and structures of European integration or over the war against terrorism. Nor can political answers alone explain the most salient fact of European reality—the fact, that is, that Western Europe is committing demographic suicide, its far-below-replacement-level birthrates creating the vacuum into which Islamic immigrants are flowing in increasing numbers, often becoming radicalized in the process.

The question for Europe is one of cultural and civilizational morale. And over it, to return to my rooftop meditations at La Grande Arche, may well hover the choice between the cathedral and the cube.

ON MAY 1 of this year, ten new members—Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and the Greek section of Cyprus—were formally admitted to the European Union, bringing the full membership to 25. EU expansion, another step toward ending the artificial cold-war division of Europe into "East" and "West," has also set in motion a lengthy process of drafting the EU's first constitution. The process has not been without its share of acrimony and political horse-trading, as old and new members alike have struggled to find a method of collective decision-making that will protect small states while acknowledging the contributions of the more populous nations to the EU's coffers; a meeting scheduled for this month will see still another effort to create a weighted voting formula acceptable to all 25 members.

At the same time, another issue, to which I have already alluded, has set off a fierce controversy in Europe but received remarkably little attention in the United States. The question is this: should the new constitution, whose preamble cites the sources of Europe's distinctive culture, make any reference to Christianity? In the current draft, that question has been answered with a resounding no. The twin roots of contemporary European civilization are identified as the continent's classical heritage—the draft begins with a citation from Thucydides—and the Enlightenment, leaving wholly unremarked a millennium-and-a-half of Christian influence on the formation of what is now "Europe."

The Polish government (largely composed of ex-Communists) has protested this omission; so has the Italian government, and so did the previous Spanish government. Pope John Paul II, whose support for the EU may have been decisive in Poland's national referendum over joining the body, devoted many addresses to the subject last summer, arguing at one point that "the Christian patrimony of [European] civilization . . . must neither vanish nor be disregarded."

In the European public square, however, these are minority voices. Last September, President Jacques Chirac of France made his government's position clear: "France is a lay state, and as such it does not have a habit of calling for insertions of a religious nature into constitutional texts." Chirac's *laïcité* was taken a step farther by Olivier Duhamel, a Socialist member of the French Chamber of Deputies, who warned against any mention of God or Christianity on the grounds that this would amount to excluding Muslims, other non-Christians, and atheists from the political community of the new Europe.

The same note was sounded by Linda McAvan, a British Labor member of the European parliament, who decried the potential offense to "those many millions of different faiths or no faith at all." Sweden's largest daily likewise editorialized against any such move, while Lena Hjelm-Wallen, a former deputy prime minister of Sweden and a member of the European constitutional convention, greeted as little more than "a joke" the news that her country's Christian Democrats actually favored some recognition of the Christian sources of European civilization. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the former president of France who is now the president of the constitutional convention, summed up the case in these blunt terms: "Europeans," he noted, "live in a purely secular political system, where religion does not play an important role."

AS A matter of empirical fact, Giscard is mistaken; over half of the people in the EU live in countries with established churches or countries that formally acknowledge God in their constitutions. What is undeniably true, however, is the extraordinarily low level of Christian *practice* in Western Europe today. For anyone inclined to Giscard's view, constitutional nods to God (or, in the case of Ireland, to "the Most Holy Trinity") must seem little more than vestiges of a past with no relevance to the present—and even less to the future.

Still, the ferocity of the opposition—the rhetoric becomes quite intemperate when the organized

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gay and "humanist" lobbies weigh in—suggests that more is afoot here than a combination of historic French *laïcité*, contemporary European secularity, and a supposed passion for social inclusiveness. After all, if the mere mention of a Christian contribution excludes Muslims, Jews, and nonbelievers, does not the elevation of the Enlightenment exclude Aristotelians, Thomists, and postmodernists who think Enlightenment rationalism had it wrong?

A reading of the draft preamble and the debate surrounding it suggests something else: in the minds of many Europeans, Christianity is not merely a nonfactor in the development of contemporary European public life but has functioned historically as an *obstacle* to the evolution of a Europe at peace, a Europe that champions human rights, a Europe that governs itself democratically. From here it is but a short step to the conviction that even to mention Europe's Christian heritage is to invite a regression to the intolerance, obscurantism, and fratricide of yesteryear. *Ecrasez l'infâme*, Voltaire famously advised; crush the (Judeo-Christian) infamy. To judge from the debate over the preamble to the proposed European constitution, crushing the "infamy" of Europe's Christian heritage would seem, as far as many contemporary European politicians and intellectuals are concerned, a necessary precondition to securing the democratic foundations of an enlarged European community. This is why it is so important to argue that nothing of consequence happened in Europe between the ages of Thucydides (or, perhaps, Marcus Aurelius) and Descartes.

In this proposed act of historical repression it is easy enough to see the desire to repress a rather different European history. I am speaking, of course, of the 20th century. For it is not from the alleged dark night of medieval Christianity but rather from the all-too-modern and all-too-secular horrors of Nazism and Communism—from, in other words, its own modernity—that the new Europe has but recently emerged. However the debate over the preamble to the Euro-constitution is ultimately resolved, the debate itself can be seen as yet another aspect of the unspoken and still unmastered confrontation of today's European elites with the terrible record of modern European history.

As it happens, the most penetrating analysis of this debate and what it means both for the future of European integration and for European democracy has come not from a European or a Christian but from an Orthodox Jew born in South Africa: Joseph H.H. Weiler, director of the Jean Monnet Center and professor of law at New York University. In a small book, *A Christian Europe: An Exploratory Essay* (unfortunately available only in Italian and Spanish),* Weiler challenges Europe's secularists on grounds of legal and political philosophy: a founding document that deliberately ignores Europe's Christian roots, he argues, would be, from a *constitutional* point of view, illegitimate.

As Weiler sees it, constitutions do three things. First, they organize state functions, identifying the responsibilities and boundaries of the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. Next, they define the relationship between citizens and the state. Finally, they are the repository, the safe-deposit box, of the values, symbols, and ideas that make a society what it is.

It is this third function, Weiler suggests, that Europe's secularists seem to have forgotten. Historical memory, he writes, is essential for moral community, and no free political community can survive in the absence of shared moral commitments. The draft Euro-constitution acknowledges this, both in its claim that Europe is a continent bearing a distinctive civilization and in its celebration of the particular common values of freedom, tolerance, and equal civil rights. But by denying to Christianity any role as one of that civilization's "constituting" assets, and any part in the historical evolution or contemporary defense of those same values, Europe's constitutional framers have put themselves in a self-contradictory position—violating, in effect, the constitution's declared commitment to tolerance. In doing so, they jeopardize, or even abort, the entire constitutional process.

There can be, then, no constituting something called Europe without consciously incorporating its Christian cultural origins. In Weiler's view, what an integrating Europe needs is a constitution that protects both "freedom of religion and freedom from religion." He has in mind something more than a mere acknowledgment that both believers and nonbelievers have equal rights in the political community. As an alternative to a "Europe" built on the model of the French agnostic state—an "Orwellian" (his term) imposition of *laïcité* in the name of pluralism—Weiler offers the truly inclusive solution adopted by Poland in its post-1989 constitution. He cites from the Polish preamble approvingly:

* The Italian edition, from which I have made the translations below, was published in 2003 by Rizzoli.

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> Taking care for the existence and the future of our Fatherland, which recovered the possibility of a sovereign and democratic determination of its own destiny in 1989, we, the Polish nation, all the citizens of the Republic—both those who believe in God as the font of truth, justice, and beauty, and those who do not share this faith but respect these universal values [as they] derive from different fonts—equal in rights and responsibilities with regard to the common good . . .

And so forth. Other commentators have complained for years about the elitist character of the EU's institutions and decision-making apparatus, charging that the entire Brussels-directed project suffers from a "democracy deficit." When it comes to the EU constitution, says Weiler, the democracy deficit is in fact a Christian deficit. How to make up that deficit in a "Christian Europe" is a question on which he has quite capacious views:

> A "Christian Europe" is not a Europe exclusively or necessarily confessional. It is a Europe that respects equally, in a full and complete way, all of its citizens: believers and "laïcists," Christians and non-Christians. It is a Europe that, while celebrating the noble heritage of Enlightenment humanism, also abandons its Christophobia and neither fears nor is embarrassed by the recognition that Christianity is one of the central elements in the evolution of its unique civilization. It is, finally, a Europe that, in public discourse about its own past and future, recovers all the riches that can come from confronting one of its two principal intellectual and spiritual traditions: its Christian heritage, particularly [as understood in] the post-Vatican II era by a pope whose teaching makes him second to none in grasping the situation of contemporary history.

In a forceful reminder to Europe's contemporary secularists, Weiler points out that the founding fathers of today's European Union—Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi, Robert Schumann, Jean Monnet—were, to a man, serious Catholics, each of whom saw European integration as a project of Christian civilization. In contrast to their example, the secularist account of the origins of today's Europe is at best incomplete, a repudiation of "part of the patrimony of Europe for believers and nonbelievers, Christians and non-Christians, alike." The meanings of that patrimony may be up for debate, but to deny its existence is to play false to democracy itself.

IN WHAT, though, does that patrimony consist? Here, another recent book is especially helpful: Peter Brown's *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200-1000.** In a narrative that ebbs and flows between the grand sweep and the poignant detail, Brown, perhaps best known for his magisterial biography, *Augustine of Hippo*, fixes one particular image in the reader's mind. The year is about 700 C.E., and two boys are living several thousand miles apart, one in what is now County Antrim, Ireland, the other in Panjikent, east of Samarkand in Central Asia. Both boys are doing their lessons in copybooks. The former is writing in Latin, in wax on wood; the latter on potsherds, in Syriac. Both are industriously copying the same work, the biblical book of Psalms—trying, in Brown's words, "to make their own . . . what had become a truly international sacred text—the 'Holy Scriptures' of the Christians."

Brown is hardly the first to have pondered how this remarkable synchronicity of experience came about. One familiar answer was given by Christopher Dawson, the mid-20th-century English "metahistorian" who spent the last decade and a half of his teaching career at Harvard. According to Dawson's account, Rome was the center of a civilizational enterprise that extended from the British Isles through North Africa and onward to the Syriac-speaking worlds of the Middle East and Central Asia. When Rome's defensive perimeter collapsed, this vast enterprise was shattered by the forces conventionally known as "the barbarians"—in effect, my Germanic ancestors. Throughout the ensuing "Dark Ages," what remained of Roman civilization was preserved by monks, who would later sally forth from their cloisters to convert the barbarian hordes. Their greatest success was with the Franks, who subsequently produced Charlemagne, whose Carolingian empire preserved the achievements of Roman civilization and set the foundations for what we now call Europe.

Told in these terms, the high point of the story falls on Christmas day in the year 800, when Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III (an event marked to this day by the large red alabaster stone on which Charlemagne knelt, now lodged in the marble floor of the nave of St. Peter's in Rome). In Charlemagne and Leo, emperor and pope, Rome embraced the barbarians, the barbarians embraced Rome (and, by extension, Athens and Jerusalem), and European civilization stood poised on the cusp of the Middle Ages, its first great moment of flourishing.

*Second, revised edition. Blackwell, 416 pp., $29.95 (paper).

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Like Christopher Dawson before him, Peter Brown knows that there is no understanding Europe without Christianity. But 40 years of scholarship have persuaded him that Dawson's storyline—expansion (the Roman Empire), contraction (barbarian invasions and Dark Ages), absorption (Charlemagne)—is too simple. My Weigel ancestors were not, Brown insists, those familiar "Wagnerian figures, with winged helmets, scale-mail breastplates, cloaks trimmed with fur, and baggy trousers." Rather, they were rural people who interacted commercially and socially with "Romans" along a wide and relatively permeable border that ran straight across Europe, following the line of the Rhine and the Danube. It was a far more various business than Dawson's account allows.

Still, if there was no center in Dawson's terms, there was a different kind of center—one that both accounted for the "triumph" and disciplined the "diversity" of Brown's subtitle. That center was Christianity, or rather what Brown dubs the "interconnectivity" of Christianity, and it was exemplified in our two 8th-century schoolboys and their copybooks. One was growing up in what would become western Christendom, the other in the Christian East. Both, however, were part of the same cultural enterprise, no matter how much their respective Catholic and Orthodox descendants would deny this fact after the mutual excommunications of 1054 C.E., and no matter how much European secularists would deny it today.

In the West, the complex encounter between the barbarians and Christianity changed both parties irrevocably. This Brown richly illustrates through sketches of such seminal figures as Gregory the Great, Augustine of Canterbury, Patrick (author of "the first pieces of extensive Latin prose to be written from beyond the frontiers of the Roman world"), Columbanus, Bede, and Boniface. What finally emerged, in the centuries immediately following the close of his narrative in the year 1000, was the distinctive Christian civilization of the High Middle Ages—the civilization that produced the cathedral that stands in contrast to the modernist cube of La Grande Arche.

It was this same civilization that, in resolving certain controversies between the Catholic Church and the public authorities of the day, produced ideas that in the fullness of time would come to be applied to the defense of human rights and to the democratic project. Thus, within 75 years of the end of Peter Brown's story, Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) was embroiled in the investiture controversy, which had to do with whether the Pope or the emperors would nominate and "invest" bishops—the heads of local churches. It was a theological and canonical argument fraught with historic consequences. Famously, Henry IV knelt in the snow at Canossa, doing penance before the pope; but the same Henry would later drive the same Gregory out of Rome into exile in Salerno, where he died; so the controversy continued. When the political and ecclesiastical dust finally settled, European civilization had absorbed a number of lessons from this early struggle between, to indulge in an anachronism, church and state.

One lesson was that a transcendent moral order stood in judgment on political power; "right" was not simply what people in power declared to be right. Another involved the rudiments of what we call pluralism: the sheer fact of the Church and its claims to authority over men's lives meant that the emperor (or, later, the state) could not be all-in-all. Politics was thereby de-sacralized; the reach of public authorities was understood to be circumscribed, at least in principle; an anti-totalitarian vaccine was injected into the European bloodstream; and the cultural ground was prepared on which a politics of consent could eventually be built. By the same token, it was paradoxically in the school of Christian culture that Europe learned about the proper dignity of the "secular": according to the Church, which took this teaching from its Jewish parent, the task for mankind was to humanize the world, which in Christian terms meant learning not to reject but rather to become "at home" in the world, even as one prepared for the world to come.

It takes a deliberate act of willfulness to contend that this rich soil was without nutrients for the Western democratic possibility. The Whig theory of history had it wrong, and so do today's French intellectuals and political leaders. The democratic project did not emerge, in a kind of political virgin birth, with either the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England or the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789 in France. Those were indeed turning points in the history of democratic institutions and modern political thought, but the cultural foundations had been laid centuries before. In that sense, Peter Brown and Christopher Dawson, for all that they would have disagreed on precisely how it happened, are agreed on the more fundamental point: there is no apprehending Europe without taking full account of what Christianity taught European man about himself, his dignity,

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his communities—including his political communities—and his destiny.

THE ARGUMENTS over Europe's past, and over the relationship between Christianity and Europe's democratic present, have a great deal to do with Europe's future. For there is no denying the grave problems that confront the continent today, including its demographic implosion and its political incapacity. Both are symptoms of a deep crisis of morale.

Let me put this in the stark terms the situation deserves. Yes, there are economic, sociological, psychological, and even ideological reasons why Europe's birthrates have fallen below replacement level for decades. But the failure to create a human future in the most elemental sense—by creating a successor generation—is surely also an expression of a broader failure: a failure of self-confidence. And to my mind, that broader failure is no less surely tied to a collapse of faith in the God of the Bible. For when God goes—and the death of the biblical God in the European public square is what today's Euro-secularists seek and have to a significant measure accomplished—so does God's first command: "be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28).

In place of its faith in the God of the Bible, European high culture has enshrined various secularist deities: tolerance, pluralism, *laïcité*, and the rest. But the worship of these substitute gods has drastically lowered Europe's moral and historical horizon. In domestic affairs, the continent has wandered into a post-political wilderness in which the authority to settle all the hard issues has been delegated to transnational courts and the bureaucracy in Brussels; hand in hand with this arrangement of public life, itself the by-product of statism and a kinder, gentler socialism, goes a cheerfully nihilistic attitude toward the idea of any transcendent order of judgment.

In international affairs, the situation is much the same. Over and above specific disagreements with American policies in the global war against terrorism, one senses an instinctual recoil from, even a horror of, the idea that freedom (as in George W. Bush's repeated declarations) is a gift from God that must be actively defended, if necessary through the "hard power" of armed force. Unapologetic confessions of religious faith by Americans are dismissed by many Europeans as evidence of fanaticism, xenophobia, and aggression—and thus, in a perverse example of displacement, are made to substitute for the danger that dare not be named: the Islamist enemy that is now inside Europe's house.

And this is where contemporary European defects intersect dangerously with American concerns for the future, including the future of the Western alliance. Having had to rescue Europe from two lethal political failures in the 20th century, Americans may once have taken comfort in the emergence of a spiritually apathetic Europe. For a while, it seemed that a political culture built on consumerism and womb-to-tomb social security would be less likely to require a further investment of American blood and treasure. But now we know differently. Europe's loss of faith in the future, embodied in its catastrophic birth rates at home and its posture of cynical appeasement in world affairs, is a danger to the United States, a nation that not coincidentally is still in touch with its own roots in the unique cultural enterprise that arose out of Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome.

Joseph Weiler, whose confidence in the power of persuasion is striking, believes that the people of the cube and the people of the cathedral can coexist in a Europe that recognizes the contributions of both. The question he leaves open, a question that touches issues far beyond European constitution-making, is to whom and to what each party can appeal in grounding its commitments to freedom, pluralism, and tolerance. For their part, Europe's dwindling numbers of Christians do know (in some cases, belatedly) why they need to engage the convictions of others with respect: because it is their Christian obligation to do so. But who, or what, teaches a similar sense of obligation to the people of the cube—the people for whom La Grande Arche represents a great leap forward from Notre-Dame? Who, or what, will teach the Europeans of the future that the democratic values this cube claims to represent are indeed worth promoting—and, especially, worth defending?

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Justice for Terrorists

J. Andrew Kent

No aspect of the Bush administration's policies since 9/11 has presented a more enduring source of controversy than its treatment of accused terrorists in its custody. The President's first response, in the immediate wake of the attacks, was to authorize the creation of military tribunals to try those captured in the campaign in Afghanistan against al Qaeda and the Taliban regime. After more than two-and-a-half years, however, the administration has yet to use these tribunals, and has slated just six detainees for trial before them, only two of whom have been formally charged.

Instead, in the dozens of terrorism-related indictments that the Justice Department has brought over this period, the administration has turned to civilian courts, often asking judges to relax the ordinary rules of procedure in light of the intelligence and national-security concerns at stake. But at every turn, whether with the military tribunals or in civilian courts, the Bush administration's efforts to restrict the usual workings of legal due process have prompted howls of outrage from both the Left and the libertarian Right.

The charges made by these critics are serious indeed. Such legal shortcuts, they argue, defy not just the best traditions of the United States but the actual guarantees imposed by federal law and the Constitution. In their view, compromising these longstanding protections puts the liberties of all Americans at risk. Moreover, they insist, whatever one's interpretation of the relevant laws, riding roughshod over the rights of accused terrorists only serves to advance their cause, reducing the standing of the U.S. in the world and putting the lie to our claims of openness and freedom.

For the most vociferous opponents of these policies, the Bush administration's basic mistake is conceptual. Heinous as our captured enemies may be, their deeds (it is said) are not acts of war but crimes, and should be handled as such, with the full force—and ordinary safeguards—of criminal law. The refrain of these critics is simple: give the courts a chance.

Since 9/11, the case of *United States* v. *Zacarias Moussaoui* is undoubtedly the best known example of using civilian courts to try an accused terrorist. A French national of Moroccan descent, Moussaoui was picked up on immigration charges in Minnesota prior to 9/11 and was indicted in late 2001. He was charged with conspiracy to commit international terrorism, to hijack an aircraft, to use the aircraft as a weapon of mass destruction, to kill U.S. government employees, and to destroy U.S. property—in short, with being a member of al Qaeda and intending to act as the twentieth hijacker on 9/11.

For the prosecution, the case has been difficult from the outset. Part of the problem is Moussaoui himself, who appears mentally unbalanced and has

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insisted at times on acting as his own lawyer, deluging the court with lengthy, ranting pleadings and demands. Moussaoui has confessed in court to membership in al Qaeda and to owing his allegiance to Osama bin Laden—but he has vehemently denied any involvement in the attacks of 9/11.

More vexing to prosecutors than the spectacle of the defendant himself, however, has been the burden placed on their case by the standard rules of disclosure, rules dictated by various federal statutes and Supreme Court rulings. In civilian trials, the government must make available to the defense a great deal of information—not just documents but also witnesses who are in custody. In Moussaoui's case, prosecutors have reluctantly complied with this obligation by providing his lawyers with written reports describing in great detail the interrogations of captured al-Qaeda operatives, including (as we can guess from various sources) such key figures as Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Ramzi bin al-Shibh, and Abu Zubaydah. What the prosecutors have repeatedly rejected is Moussaoui's demand to question al-Qaeda detainees. Indeed, the proceedings in the case have been stopped and started several times by sharp disputes between the government and the judge about whether Moussaoui's lawyers, in the interest of bolstering his defense, should be allowed this privilege.

In an ordinary criminal trial, none of this would be an issue; both the defendant and his lawyers would have access to all relevant documents and witnesses. Cumbersome as this requirement may be at times, it is the cornerstone of any fair system of criminal justice. Here, however, it is essential to keep in mind the peculiar character of the case. The men whose testimony Moussaoui has sought are not petty criminals or mobsters. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed is thought to have been the master strategist of the 9/11 attack, Ramzi bin al-Shibh the operational planner. In the middle of a vicious, unfinished war with al Qaeda, it is problematic, to say the least, to make known the details of their lengthy interrogations.

THE RULES governing such disclosures in federal courts are extremely broad. They require prosecutors to share any evidence that is "favorable to the accused" or "exculpatory," or that is even "material" to the defense. Prosecutors and law-enforcement agents working on a case are also required to take the additional step of searching their files for *any* information (not just evidence, in the strict sense) that might meet these criteria; such materials must be turned over to the defense as well. Nor is that all. According to various court rulings on these matters, any government agency that becomes "aligned" or "actively involved" with the prosecutors, or functions in some way as part of the "prosecution team," must similarly search its files and, upon request, disclose information to the defense.

In law-enforcement lingo, this issue is referred to simply as "alignment." Over the years, courts have found alignment—and hence a duty to search for and disclose information—between federal prosecutors and such far-flung agencies as the United States Postal Service, the Internal Revenue Service, the Food and Drug Administration, a state environmental testing laboratory, and even foreign governments. In terrorism cases, the demands for transparency point to all those parts of the government holding our most sensitive secrets, including the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Under these rules, indeed, the disclosure of reams of information gathered by the military and intelligence communities has become a routine part of terrorism prosecutions. A February 2001 decision in the case of Wadih el-Hage—Osama bin Laden's personal secretary, who helped coordinate the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa—ordered the government to hand over a virtual encyclopedia of anti-terrorist intelligence: materials "relating to the alleged al-Qaeda terrorist training camps in the Sudan"; "information that led the government to believe that . . . associates of Mr. bin Laden visited [the defendant's] former residence in Nairobi"; "items which indicate that al Qaeda operated under a 'cell' structure in which participants were informed of plans and activities only on a 'need-to-know' basis"; and any documents containing "information that impeaches statements that the government intends to use that were uttered by . . . Osama bin Laden" and other al-Qaeda members. As Andrew C. McCarthy, a former prosecutor who tried Islamist terrorists in federal court during the 1990's, recently noted in these pages, such disclosures "illuminate not only what the government knows about terrorist organizations but the intelligence agencies' methods and sources for obtaining that information."*

ENTER, HERE, an additional complication, and one paradoxically engendered by the intelligence reforms instituted since 9/11. These altogether necessary and long-overdue reforms have, in themselves, significantly increased the risk that our anti-terrorism efforts will be compromised by disclosures in court.

As various commissions and commentators have

* "The Intelligence Mess: How It Happened, What to Do About It," April 2004.

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concluded, legal "walls" erected in the past between law-enforcement and intelligence agencies prevented the sharing of crucial information that might have averted the attacks. Fortunately, the most prominent of these barriers have already come down. The USA Patriot Act, for instance, undid rules limiting the dissemination of grand-jury materials and the fruits of law-enforcement wiretaps. And a November 2002 decision by the special federal appeals court that handles foreign-intelligence surveillance overturned a lower-court decision that had limited the sharing of information between, on the one hand, those prosecutors and FBI agents working on intelligence and, on the other hand, those conducting law-enforcement investigations.

Combined with other changes in process even before 9/11, all this has helped break down the institutional and cultural divides between intelligence and law enforcement, especially in the realms of information technology and personnel. Though much remains to be done, there is more cooperation now than ever before between these crucial and complementary agencies of the federal government.

And that is the problem. To a defense lawyer with a client who is an accused terrorist, these reforms represent a giant neon billboard flashing the word "alignment." In the future, defense counsel will be able to argue that the files of our intelligence agencies should be subject to ever more extensive search and disclosure obligations, for the simple reason that the agencies themselves will be acting ever more cooperatively. Significant parts of the federal intelligence apparatus, it can be claimed plausibly, will now be the "prosecution team."

THE PERNICIOUS effects of such courtroom disclosure are likely to extend well beyond tipping the government's hand to our enemies. *Foreign* intelligence services, as well as freelance sources in the field, are already leery of working with the U.S. for fear that their secrets—and their identities—will show up in congressional hearings or press leaks; heightened concern about exposure in court can only make matters worse. The same is true of cooperation within the federal government, especially in light of longstanding fears at the CIA that joint ventures with the FBI will draw the agency into potentially damaging legal proceedings.

There is also the very real possibility that revelations in court will increasingly interfere with ongoing intelligence operations. As R. James Woolsey, the former Director of Central Intelligence, has observed about the gathering of national-security information, the "only way you will know in the future something that you may need to know is if you can stay with an asset for a long time." Law enforcement, by contrast, demands a faster timetable, pushed along by statutes of limitation and the requirement for a "speedy trial." To the extent that the two functions are further combined, the needs of intelligence-gathering are likely to suffer.

Worse, the record-keeping practices that are needed to comply with—and limit the damage caused by—the disclosure standards set by courts tend to inhibit the wide-ranging analysis and prediction of national-security threats. The FBI's information-management system has come under harsh criticism for segregating—"stovepiping," in current Washington parlance—information and preventing the salutary "connecting of dots." According to U.S. Senator Richard Shelby, a frequent critic of our intelligence efforts, the FBI still suffers from a "tyranny of the case-file" because it stores and reviews information with an eye to proving "elements of crimes against specific potential defendants in a court of law." Rather than rectifying this problem, we risk generalizing it across *all* of our intelligence agencies, making it more likely that we will repeat the errors of oversight leading up to the attacks of 9/11.

A related difficulty is that intelligence agencies are far more likely than their counterparts in law enforcement to generate information that is arguably "exculpatory," and therefore subject to disclosure in court. As Stewart Baker, former general counsel of the National Security Agency, observed some years ago in *Foreign Policy* magazine, law-enforcement agencies "have learned to live with" these rules by assuming that any internal document "will be read by a defense attorney at the end of the day." Intelligence agencies operate very differently. Their uses of information "are more diverse," Baker noted, "the process more fluid"; much of the information they collect consists of "casual speculation or fragments of data." But the unreliability of this raw intelligence has no bearing in court. Because it might be useful to the defense, it may well have to be searched and disclosed.

SO HOW can we render justice to someone like Zacarias Moussaoui while at the same time prosecuting the war on terror and protecting vital intelligence operations? How can fair adjudication be combined with a due regard for secrecy? Officials in all three branches of government have struggled with this question for years, and no one has come up with a wholly satisfactory answer.

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Some protections for sensitive information are already in place. The Justice Department, for example, has long had rules to limit and monitor contacts between prosecutors and intelligence agencies like the CIA, so as to avoid pretexts for dragging agents and analysts into court. Judges have the discretion to rule that certain information will be disclosed only to defense lawyers who have security clearances, and not to their clients. (This is what has occurred in the Moussaoui case.) And the Classified Information Procedures Act (CIPA, passed in 1980) allows prosecutors to request the disclosure of a nonclassified version of sensitive information.

But these safeguards go only so far. In a civilian trial, any limitation on disclosure must be guided, according to the congressional report accompanying CIPA, by a "presumption that the defendant should not stand in a worse position, because of the fact that classified information is involved." As the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit stated in its recent decision in the Moussaoui case, the prosecution's "interest in protecting classified information does not overcome a defendant's right to present his case." In practice, competent defense counsel can always argue—as they have done in the Moussaoui case—that specific details about the alleged offense, the investigation of it, and the background of the government's witnesses must be disclosed.

Congress could try, of course, to create additional protections. To prevent defense attorneys from going on fishing expeditions in sensitive intelligence files, new laws might define disclosure obligations in such a way as to apply only to the specific files at "aligned" intelligence agencies that are directly involved with a given case. Or Congress could simply grant a broad exemption to intelligence agencies, making their files off-limits except in certain very narrow circumstances. But the problem with such measures, especially the last, is that they almost certainly would be struck down in court. Though some of the existing disclosure requirements are purely statutory, others spring from Supreme Court cases, especially the landmark ruling in *Brady* v. *Maryland* (1963). "*Brady* obligations" (as they are commonly called) are now a deeply entrenched part of American legal culture, and there is no reason to think the Supreme Court would accept any effort to curtail them.

DESPITE THE hue and cry of libertarian critics, the least objectionable solution to these dilemmas is the one with which the Bush administration started: military tribunals. Civilian courts are simply not equipped—nor should they be equipped—to deal with the likes of Zacarias Moussaoui. Terrorism and terrorist conspiracy demand a different set of rules.

The tribunal procedures announced by the Bush administration in November 2001 may not satisfy the ACLU, but they strike the right balance between due process and due concern for the nation's security. Even under these rules, prosecutors are required to disclose "all information intended for presentation as evidence at trial," especially that which might "exculpate the accused." But these disclosures can be limited in ways that would never be possible in a civilian trial. Any sensitive piece of evidence can be presented in a declassified summary fashion, for example, and the tribunal can close its proceedings to anyone—including the accused and his civilian defense counsel—except the judges, the prosecution team, and a Department of Defense lawyer assigned to represent the accused.

The Bush administration's disinclination to use military tribunals is understandable (though one wonders why the President wasted so much political capital to establish them). No one can be pleased at the idea of denying the fullest possible hearing even to a would-be terrorist like Moussaoui. But, as all Americans have had occasion to learn in recent years, our elected officials have duties that are even more urgent than ensuring perfectly fair trials, especially when the country is faced with threats that no mere criminal could ever pose.

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OBSERVATIONS

The Church of Civil Rights

Wilfred M. McClay

NEARLY A half-century has passed since the heyday of the early civil-rights movement, and race relations in America have grown far too complex to be reckoned by its simple compass. But the campaign to undo the system of segregation in the South seems to have lost none of its moral appeal. If my own experience as a teacher is any guide, a sizable percentage of applicants for graduate study in U.S. history are still likely to cite the civil-rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's as one of their chief inspirations. A surprising number of them set out with hopes of making the movement itself an object of their research.

One wonders what fresh discoveries these earnest young scholars expect to happen upon in such a well-sifted field. But that is beside the point. Clearly, a different kind of motivation is at work here, deeper than mere intellectual curiosity, political calculation, or professional ambition. One cannot help being impressed by it, particularly since the prospective students themselves are nearly always white and economically privileged. But neither is their choice free of self-regard. On the contrary: the felt urgency of the subject is an indication that they are, in some sense, hoping to work out their own salvation in the process of studying it. Reared in a world full of imperfect heroes and compromised ideals, in which their own wealth and ease fill them with ambivalence if not guilt, they seem to harbor a powerful need to redeem their lives through association with a cause they regard as incontrovertibly pure, simple, and noble.

By a similar process, for better or worse, the civil-rights movement has become a moral icon for American society as a whole, as well as for much of the rest of the world. For better, because it was indeed an admirable movement, in both its means and its ends, and one that clearly had the effect of improving the American nation and recalling it to its own professed ideals. For worse, because to the extent that the movement's example has come to be used mindlessly and mechanically, as a template for all social and political struggles, its exaltation has also tended to elevate social movements over institutional politics, demonstrations over deliberations, righteous theatrics over reasoned compromise.

This is not the fault of the movement itself. Nor is it the only factor contributing to the widespread tendency to reduce the multifarious patterns of history to variations upon a few easily grasped archetypes. Nevertheless, that habit is as wrongheaded as it is tempting. Not every tyrant is a Hitler, not every intervention a Vietnam, not every massacre a Holocaust—and not every aspiring social cause is analogous to the civil-rights movement or deserves to be placed on a continuum with it.

HOW, THEN, to find our way back to a truer and more precise understanding of the movement and its place in American history? One of the many virtues of David L. Chappell's new book, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion, Liberalism, and the*

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Death of Jim Crow,* is its insistence that we look carefully at the particulars of this great undertaking and the specific reasons it succeeded. A briskly written volume by a professor of history at the University of Arkansas, feisty in tone but impressive in its scholarly documentation, *A Stone of Hope* stands back from the welter of comment accumulated over the past 50 years and asks some refreshingly direct and simple questions. How and why did this great cultural change happen? Why did the dominant liberalism of the Democratic party contribute so little, and so late, to the effort? Where did black Southerners find the inspiration to rebel against a massively entrenched social system? And why did their white Southern opponents turn out to be so surprisingly weak?

The short answer to each of these four questions can be put in a single word: religion. More specifically, Chappell argues that one cannot apprehend the movement's success without taking into account the pervasive cultural setting of Southern Protestantism within which it unfolded. He is not merely claiming religion as "a neglected factor." Instead, he is claiming it as the absolutely crucial conditioning factor, without which nothing could have occurred as it did.

In this view, the civil-rights movement was not a fundamentally political mobilization, with lots of soulful gospel songs and other colorful trappings of African-American religious culture added in on the side—a position that Chappell dismisses for the subtle condescension that it is. Instead, it was primarily a high-octane religious revival, full of prophetic utterances and messianic expectations, which had the effect, almost as a byproduct, of leading to profound political and social change.

In making this argument, Chappell gives the back of his hand to white liberal commentators like Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and Gunnar Myrdal, who at the time envisioned the cause of racial justice as but one element in the great unfolding of a progressive agenda. Their untroubled confidence in the inevitable triumph of their own ideas, Chappell believes, ironically made them complacent and unwilling to act decisively. Even when they tempered their rational optimism with the gloomier outlook of the Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, as Schlesinger did repeatedly, they never really took on board the full weight of Niebuhr's pessimistic view of human nature. Whatever the setbacks of the moment, liberals knew themselves to be anointed by history as the party of the future, and so deemed the cause of black civil rights in the South to be insufficiently pressing to jeopardize the liberals' electoral chances. As Chappell puts it acidly, "opportunism on this issue dictated the same [empty] gestures as idealism."

By contrast, black Southern preachers and their followers approached life with a different anthropology, and a different view of progress. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s fundamentalist Baptist background may have been at odds with his seminary education in the liberal North, but the two meshed well in his view of human nature and the prophetic calling of the Christian leader. The doctrine of original sin, the tendency of all human endeavors to slide into corruption, the incapacity of human institutions to reform themselves without divine favor, the need for the man of God to stand outside the comfort of the status quo and speak with the boldness of Jeremiah calling the people to repentance, and the need for the faithful to experience suffering and submission to God's will as the price of their redemption: these were things that King, and his followers, all instinctively grasped.

The biblical view of man and God and sin and suffering and humility and redemption was, for those black Southerners, their chief sustenance, their spiritual meat and drink, their everyday solace and their hope for the end-times. Without the primal, driving force of their deep religious convictions, Chappell contends, the civil-rights movement would never have begun to move.

THIS PART of Chappell's argument, though convincing, is not entirely original. Most standard accounts of the movement do give a good deal of space to its religious elements, even if they often tend (not entirely without reason) to emphasize the black church as a political and social institution rather than as a religious one. In recent years, moreover, students of the struggle have increased the attention paid to religion, as in works like Charles Marsh's *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (1999) and Stewart Burns's *To the Mountaintop: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Sacred Mission to Save America* (2004). Even Chappell's portrayal of King's philosophy of "hope without optimism" has been presented before, notably in an extraordinarily insightful chapter of Christopher Lasch's *The True and Only Heaven* (1991), upon which this book draws.

If Chappell is far from unique in emphasizing the depth and specific character of the movement's religious commitments, he may also be too sweeping in his condemnation of cold-war liberalism and too hard on the particular liberals he has chosen to pin to the wall. He himself has a certain prophetic impatience with the inevitable messiness and compromise of electoral politics, an impatience that is one of those ambivalent legacies of the movement itself. (Max Weber's great and gloomy lecture on "Politics as Vocation" was written with just such impatience in mind.) Similarly, he gives too little weight to the long-term legal strategy by which the NAACP sought to break the hold of segrega-

* University of North Carolina Press, 330 pp., $34.95.

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tion through a carefully calibrated succession of court cases, thereby establishing an essential (though morally far less impressive) complement to the movement's more expansive and faith-suffused impulses.

Nor does Chappell adequately stress the fact that many key players in the intellectual leadership of the movement, including Bayard Rustin and Robert Moses, espoused views that did not line up with the evangelical Protestantism of King. (It is a bit of stretch, for example, to argue that Moses's commitment to the philosophy of Albert Camus was somehow the same as a religious commitment to biblical Christianity.) This book, in short, is not without flaws, and in a number of respects may well turn out to be a corrective in need of correction.

But what makes *A Stone of Hope* a truly exciting and important intellectual breakthrough is not its claims about the religiosity of the movement itself. Rather, it is Chappell's careful and imaginative approach to *white* Southern religious convictions and the white Christian response to the movement. This has been a long time in coming. "The standard image of the white South in the civil-rights struggle," Chappell rightly observes, "is a mob." In that respect, this book, although it can hardly be considered overly sympathetic to the white South, is a real advance.

IT IS frequently assumed, for example, that in this great cultural conflict, each side devised its own self-contained and self-confirming version of the Christian faith. King himself, in a famous line that Chappell strangely misrenders here, spoke of eleven o'clock on a Sunday morning being "the most segregated hour of Christian America." But this turns out to be far less true of the white South in the civil-rights era than King's words would suggest. As Chappell points out, even though most white Southern Protestant churches were still aligned with the same sectionalist denominations that had been created a century earlier by the Civil War, they were by and large unsupportive of the segregationist cause.

In some cases, this unsupportiveness took the form of outright and unambiguous opposition. Thus, the denominational assemblies of the Southern Baptists and Southern Presbyterians went on the record with resolutions strongly favoring desegregation. The evangelist Rev. Billy Graham was admirably consistent in his opposition to racial segregation from the very beginning of his career, both in his public utterances and in his private and personal behavior.

Elsewhere, to be sure, the picture was different. Far from repudiating segregation, white churches characteristically adopted an attitude of quiet, passive, evasive neutrality. This naturally frustrated King, though it also fed his hopeful conviction that the majority of white Southerners could eventually be won over to his position.

In any event, as Chappell perceptively notes, the muted response of white Southern clergy also frustrated the segregationists, leaving them disabled in crucial ways. White Southern faith may not have been strong enough to overcome ingrained racial and social barriers—it was too tied to the status quo for that—but it was at least strong enough to withhold from those barriers the full mantle of legitimacy. This in turn made it necessary for segregationist politicians to fight for their cause on strictly sociological and constitutional grounds—or with undiluted demagoguery.

And that made all the difference. From the beginning, the specific dynamics of the civil-rights movement were traceable to the fact that both sides agreed on something—and that something was the truth and legitimizing force of Christianity. Though mightier than the civil-rights movement in many superficial respects, the movement's white Southern opponents were disarmed by their inability to count on the moral support of the South's most characteristic institution or to draw on the same sources of strength that animated their foes.

In Chappell's telling, the presence of this shared cultural premise was just as fundamental as anything the two sides disagreed about. It permeated the field of forces, as essential a feature of the battle as the air the antagonists breathed. And it determined the outcome: for in this struggle, as Chappell writes, the winners were those who "got strength from old-time religion," and who "used religion to inspire solidarity and self-sacrificial devotion to their cause."

IF CHAPPELL'S reading of the movement is right, it ought to affect the way we assess its significance in American and world history.

For one thing, Chappell's reading should help explain to Americans why Tiananmen Square was not Selma, and why the tactics of King and Gandhi do not work against a Saddam Hussein or the Iranian mullahs. Such tactics seek to prick consciences that are shaped like one's own; but they fall pitiably short when the "other" inhabits a genuinely different moral universe. For all its shortcomings, the United States has always had such a shared moral framework, grounded not merely in abstract ideas of human rights and individual liberty but also in a longer and deeper heritage of biblical narratives, tropes, parables, and moral wisdom. This is one reason why our own struggles and triumphs are so difficult to replicate in the rest of the world.

In addition, *A Stone of Hope* reminds us that movements for change in American history are likely to succeed and endure only to the degree that they respect the country's religious heritage or are broadly congruent with it. Here one might cite not only the civil-rights movement but also the abolition of

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slavery, women's suffrage, and even the American Revolution itself. On all of these hard-fought issues one can find both religious and secular rationales being advanced, but the two sets of justifications are also mutually supportive and even intermingle to an extent unthinkable in other cultures.

That congruency is a key element in the genius of American politics, as of American religion. It is why Martin Luther King's finest rhetoric could with equal plausibility invoke not only the prophetic Scriptures but also the Declaration and the Constitution and the founders, and why the historian Stewart Burns is not being fanciful in interpreting King's life's work as a "sacred mission" to "save America." We enshrine the separation of church and state, but at the same time we practice the mingling of religion and public life. It is not always logical, but it frequently makes good sense.

Of course, in each of these cases (and especially slavery and suffrage), there were also religiously grounded arguments *against* change. Sometimes, moreover, religious and secular arguments for reform may be united in their mistakenness: consider Prohibition. Nothing in life is foolproof. But there are almost no examples in the American past of successful and widely accepted reforms that have not paid their respect to Americans' religious and secular sensibilities alike. They are required to pass muster with, so to speak, a bicameral body politic.

THIS FACT also has profound implications for the larger meanings we have allowed ourselves to derive from the civil-rights movement. In the first place, one must view with the profoundest regret the transformation of the movement by the late 1960's from an instrument of national integration and reconciliation into an instrument of what Lasch rightly called "the politics of resentment and reparations." That transformation corresponded exactly with the loss of the movement's religious core and its turn toward a rather different combination of impulses: strident social militancy on the one hand, court-imposed legalism on the other.

This purely coercive combination is still with us today, with the consequence that as the material conditions of American blacks have steadily improved, race relations remain mired in mutual suspicion—a state that has reached a kind of culmination in the astoundingly pointless and divisive debate over reparations for slavery. Whatever the outcome of that debate, it will never further the cause of reconciliation.

If, in the area of race relations, it makes no sense to abstract the movement from its relationship to its larger religious context, the same goes for its use as an analogy in other contexts. Two of the most contentious issues of recent years have been abortion and gay marriage. In both cases, not only have policy changes been imposed by courts rather than through representative institutions, but those involved have sought to challenge and override the very core of the country's prevailing religious convictions.

This tactic has been enormously costly. Even today, three decades after *Roe* v. *Wade*, the cause of unrestricted abortion rights stands largely on the acts of unelected judges and on the morally unimpressive principle of *stare decisis*. It has few if any full-throated defenders among the religiously devout—and many fervent opponents, who look increasingly to the 19th-century abolitionists and the 20th-century civil-rights movement for inspiration. One can safely predict that the issue will continue to be a source of social division in the years to come.

Proponents of gay marriage, for their part, also invoke the civil-rights movement as precedent, comparing proscriptions against same-sex unions to anti-miscegenation laws and other forms of discrimination. But there is a reason why no subgroup registers more negatively on this issue in opinion surveys than blacks. It is not just that they know when their movement is being hijacked. It is that the religious sensibility that animated the civil-rights movement, and that is still very much alive in the American black community today, is bound up in a biblical world view that would no more countenance the radical redefinition of marriage than it would the reimposition of slavery. When King and his followers joyfully invoked the word "freedom," they did not mean the unlimited expressive liberty of autonomous individuals. Their conception of freedom was inseparable not only from their rootedness in their own particular place and time but in obedience to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

None of this is meant to imply that the religious are always right, or should have supervisory power over all social change, any more than should the federal and state judiciaries. It is merely to recognize the longstanding and indispensable place of religion in the American experiment, and the high price to be paid when it is sundered from the cause of social change. Fortunately, as David Chappell's book shows, we do not have to choose whether to call the story of the civil-rights movement a Christian story, a Southern story, or an American story, for it is all three. This is a fact for which all Americans, not only Christians or Southerners—or secularists—can be grateful, and an example to ponder with care.

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MUSIC

Is the Musical Comedy Dead?

Terry Teachout

THE BROADWAY musical is dead. Such, at any rate, is the conventional wisdom, echoed by everyone from aging theatergoers who saw Ethel Merman in *Gypsy* to youthful academics who write about popular culture as if it were *Finnegans Wake*. Among the latter is Andrea Most, an assistant professor of English at the University of Toronto, who unequivocally states in a new book called *Making Americans: Jews and the Broadway Musical* that "after a brief heyday that lasted into the 1960's, musicals quickly declined as the popular American cultural form."[1]

Perhaps. And yet no other genre remains so central to American theatrical life. Of the twenty "top Broadway shows" listed in the April 23 *Wall Street Journal/Zagat Theater Survey*, a weekly poll of New York theatergoers, sixteen were musicals. Among movies, *Chicago* (2002), the most recent film version of a Broadway musical, won six Oscars, including Best Picture. Most of the best musicals of the 20th century continue to be revived regularly, on Broadway and elsewhere, just as their songs continue to be sung and recorded.

Still, it is evident that the demand for first-rate *new* musicals greatly outstrips the supply. I have just completed my first year as drama critic of the *Wall Street Journal*, and in the course of it I reviewed fourteen Broadway musicals: *Assassins*, *Avenue Q*, *Big River*, *The Boy from Oz*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Gypsy*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Look of Love*, *Never Gonna Dance*, *Nine*, *Taboo*, *Urban Cowboy*, *Wicked*, and *Wonderful Town*.[2] Of these, only *Avenue Q* and *Wicked* had newly composed scores. Five others were "jukebox" shows whose scores consisted partly or wholly of older songs, while the remaining seven were revivals. To date, seven have either closed or posted closing notices.

Clearly, this is not the track record of a flourishing theatrical medium—which suggests that the conventional wisdom about the current state of the Broadway musical may well be correct. But can these shows tell us anything else about the state of American musical comedy at the beginning of its second century?

ONE THING these fourteen shows do bring home is that the golden age of musical comedy lasted for only about a quarter-century. Except for *Show Boat* (1927) and *Porgy and Bess* (1935), no American musical written prior to 1940 has had a consistently successful life in revival.[3] The oldest musical now playing on Broadway, *Wonderful Town* (music by Leonard Bernstein, book and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green), was written in 1953, while *Fiddler on the Roof* (music by Jerry Bock, lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, book by Joseph Stein), the

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[1] Harvard, 253 pp., $29.95.

[2] I also covered a children's musical, *A Year with Frog and Toad.*

[3] The only other exceptions are shows like *Girl Crazy* (1930, revived in 1992 as *Crazy for You*) and *Anything Goes* (1934, revived in 1987), whose original books have been extensively or completely rewritten by other hands.

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last of the indisputably "classic" musicals, opened in 1964.

The reason most pre-1940 musicals are unrevivable is that their books tend to be both slapdash in literary quality and fanciful to the point of absurdity. It was only in the late 30's that the songwriting team of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart began to emphasize dramatic plausibility, most notably in *Pal Joey* (1940). And it was not until Rodgers joined forces with Oscar Hammerstein II in 1943 to write *Oklahoma!* that the "book show," whose songs are integrated into a more or less realistic plot, became the norm.

Nearly every successful musical written between 1943 and 1964 was influenced by the example of *Oklahoma!* From this perspective, it is no accident that *On the Town* (1944), *Carousel* (1945), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946), *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948), *Guys and Dolls* (1950), *The King and I* (1951), *My Fair Lady* (1956), *The Music Man* (1957), *West Side Story* (1957), *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (1961), and *Hello, Dolly!* (1964), all of which have been revived one or more times on Broadway, now constitute the bulk of the musical-comedy repertory.

But these shows, and others like them, have more in common than the integration of book and score that is typical of the *Oklahoma!*-style musical. For one thing, their songs are written in the same idiom. The scores of these pre-rock-and-roll Broadway musicals are a melting-pot amalgam of European operetta, ragtime, and early jazz, while their lyrics are an updating of the virtuoso wordplay of W.S. Gilbert, translated into the pungent colloquialisms of what H.L. Mencken called "the American language." Different songwriters use this language in their own distinctive ways—Irving Berlin spoke it with the no-nonsense accent of Tin Pan Alley, while Leonard Bernstein brought to it his intimate knowledge of 20th-century classical music—but in all cases it was (and is) easily recognizable as a common stylistic idiom.

Similarly held in common are the underlying assumptions on which the books of the classic Broadway musicals are based. Bernstein observed in 1956 that the musical was "an art that arises out of American roots, out of our speech, our tempo, our moral attitudes, our timing, our kind of humor." It is, in short, a kind of cultural mirror, one in which we see a reflection of the American national character—an epitome of the way we are, the way we act and think, the things we believe about ourselves and our country. And just as most Americans are both optimistic and idealistic, so do golden-age musicals, with their romance-driven plots and happy endings, reflect those twin attitudes.

This is not to say that the classic musicals are all naive or simple-minded. From the outset of their long collaboration, Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote shows in which major characters die; *Fiddler on the Roof* is a jarringly black "comedy" about a pogrom and a forced emigration. Still, these shows offer an essentially untragic vision of human possibility. Even *West Side Story*, an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* that concludes with a funeral, presents violent death not as an end but as a beginning, an opportunity for the members of the rival Sharks and Jets to be healed and transformed by grief.

It is noteworthy that most of these shows were written either in whole or in part by first- and second-generation Jewish immigrants, who might reasonably have been expected (especially after World War II) to take a grim view of American life. Instead, they embraced the optimism of their new land, an attitude that Andrea Most interprets as a conscious act of self-assimilation. Every classic American musical, she writes,

> tells a story about difference and community. In each play, there are outsiders who need to be converted, assimilated, or accepted into the group. . . . For all sorts of outsiders, the way to become American is, in other words, a Jewish way, and those who follow that path perform—wittingly or unwittingly—a Jewish story, which is to say, an American story, indeed the American story.

One need not accept the rest of Most's ultra-politicized account of the development of the musical-comedy idiom to acknowledge the force of this interpretation, in which the optimistic idealism of the classic American musical is understood as a symbol of the American creed of liberty, equality, and opportunity for all—not excluding Jews.

TWO OF the three classic American musicals currently running on Broadway, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Wonderful Town*, belong to this tradition. Not so the recently closed *Gypsy* (1959, music by Jule Styne, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, book by Arthur Laurents), whose sour vision of American life is far more equivocal. Significantly, *Gypsy*, like *West Side Story* before it, features lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, who in the 70's would become the emblematic figure of the "post-classic" American musical.

By then, the initiating impulse of the classic musical was more or less exhausted, in part because its major figures were old or dead, or (like Bernstein) had lost interest in the form. Younger men like Sondheim had different ideas—and different temperaments. As I have written elsewhere, Sondheim, if not entirely cynical, was no optimist. His idealism was badly bruised, and his shows, with their deep-seated ambivalence toward romantic love, reflect that fact.[4]

But the decline of the classic American musical cannot be blamed on the prodigiously gifted Sondheim, much less on the decrepitude

[4] See "Sondheim's Operas" (COMMENTARY, May 2003), reprinted in *A Terry Teachout Reader*.

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of its earlier practitioners. Nor can it be ascribed to the rise of rock-and-roll, even though certain aspects of rock (most notably its lack of rhythmic variety) are to some extent incompatible with the specifically theatrical demands of musical comedy. Far more important is the fact that what one might call the "ideology" of the classic American musicals reflected the attributes of a common culture that no longer exists—at least not in Manhattan, the cultural capital of Blue America and the crucible in which the musical has historically been smelted.

Consider the four post-classic musicals revived on Broadway in the past year:

- *Nine* (1982, music and lyrics by Maury Yeston, book by Arthur Kopit) is a watered-down stage version of Federico Fellini's 1962 film *8½*, a self-reflexive fable about a neurotic Italian film director who is incapable of finishing his current movie.
- *Little Shop of Horrors* (1982, music by Alan Menken, book and lyrics by Howard Ashman) is a rock-and-roll adaptation of a low-budget horror film about a man-eating plant.
- *Big River* (1985, book by William Hauptman, music and lyrics by Roger Miller) is a country-music adaptation of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.*
- *Assassins* (1991, music and lyrics by Sondheim, book by John Weidman) is a fantasy about nine men and women who have killed or attempted to kill American Presidents, set to a score consisting of parodies of various American popular-music idioms.

Not only do these four shows make use of musical styles that have little or nothing in common, but three of them also break with the ideological basis of the golden-age American musical. Indeed, *Assassins* explicitly rejects that ideology, arguing instead that the American creed is a snare and a delusion: "There's another national anthem, folks,/For those who never win,/For the suckers,/For the pikers,/For the ones who might have been."

Whatever else they may tell us about postmodern American life, then, these shows (*Big River* excepted) clearly bespeak a loss of confidence in America itself. And it is no less revealing that none of them, not even Sondheim's *Assassins*, has a truly distinguished score. Just as postmodern American artists lost faith in the American creed, so apparently did they lose the ability to write songs capable of appealing not merely to a narrow segment of the listening public but to ordinary Americans as a whole.

The same loss of nerve was evident in the "new" Broadway musicals that opened last year. Five of them, as I mentioned earlier, are "jukebox" shows whose scores were mostly stitched together from preexisting songs. They were recycled in other ways as well. *Urban Cowboy* was a tawdry adaptation of a once-popular 1980 movie about Houston nightlife. *The Look of Love* was a plotless revue based on the insipid pop songs of Burt Bacharach and Hal David. *The Boy from Oz* and *Taboo* were loosely biographical shows about Peter Allen and Boy George, two forgotten pop-music stars. And *Never Gonna Dance* was a futile attempt to create a synthetic stage musical in the style of the Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers films. Such blatant derivativeness is a sure sign of terminal exhaustion.

Not surprisingly, all five shows were inferior in quality and received mostly negative reviews, and all are now closed save for *The Boy from Oz*, which has remained open solely on the strength of the charismatic performance of its star, Hugh Jackman.

That leaves us with two completely new musicals, one of which is an awkward blend of classic and post-classic elements, while the other represents a decisive shift in a new direction.

Wicked (music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, book by Winnie Holzman), the most commercially successful new Broadway musical of the last twelve months, is a big-budget stage version of Gregory Maguire's *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* (1995). Maguire's novel is itself a postmodern commentary on L. Frank Baum's "Wizard of Oz" stories, in which Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West, is revealed to have been a good witch who was misunderstood by her parents, while Glinda, the Good Witch, is unmasked as a brown-nosing opportunist. Maguire's heavy-handed ironies, however, are smoothed over in the Schwartz-Holzman adaptation of *Wicked*, a traditionally structured book show with a soft-rock score in the quaint-sounding style of Schwartz's 70's hits, *Pippin* (1972) and *Godspell* (1976).

While *Wicked* is theatrically effective, it is also predictable, not least in its self-conscious inversion of the moral values of the *Oz* books, and Schwartz's simplistic music has aged poorly. The show's commercial success derives mainly from the outstanding performances of its stars, Kristin Chenoweth and Idina Menzel, and from the elaborate and expensive production directed by Joe Mantello and designed by Eugene Lee. For all its undeniable charm, however, *Wicked* impresses one as a period piece written long after its period was over.

As for *Avenue Q* (music and lyrics by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx, book by Jeff Whitty), it is something else again: one of the first Broadway musicals to reflect the post-postmodern attitudes of "Generation X," the children of the baby boomers. A parody of *Sesame Street*, whose characters are played by puppets manipulated in full view of the audience, *Avenue Q* is set in "an outer-outer borough of New York City" where rents are low enough to be afforded by recent college graduates with low-paying, entry-level jobs. These young people tend to be cyn-

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ical about nearly everything, not least higher education ("Four years of college and plenty of knowledge/Have earned me this useless degree"); in *Avenue Q*, they sing of their disillusion in the relentlessly upbeat tones of the children's TV shows of the 70's.

Unlike the similarly acidic *Urinetown* (2001), a cold-hearted musical-comedy spoof that deals exclusively in surfaces, *Avenue Q* has a subject of real interest—the diminished expectations of its angry young characters—and many of its satirical touches are quite sharp. The funniest number, "Everyone's a Little Bit Racist," goes so far as to skewer Left-liberal conformity: "Everyone's a little bit racist—it's true/But everyone is just about as racist—as you!/If we all could just admit/That we are racist a little bit/And everyone stopped being so P.C.,/Maybe we could live in—harmony!"

As so often with today's musicals, the show's weak link is its score, which never rises above the level of brilliant pastiche, especially in its unconvincing ballads. Yet despite its makers' inability to express emotion except from behind the mask of irony, *Avenue Q* points to the possibility of promising new directions for its genre.

IT IS significant that *Avenue Q*, unlike *Wicked*, has the feel not of a Broadway but of an off-Broadway show. Many of Stephen Sondheim's later musicals (including *Assassins*) were initially produced off Broadway, as were such Sondheim-influenced shows as *Urinetown*, Adam Guettel's *Floyd Collins* (1994), and Michael John LaChiusa's *Marie Christine* (1999), whose unconventional subject matter and musical adventurousness scared off Broadway producers.[5]

Despite the commercial success of *Avenue Q* and *Urinetown*, it remains to be seen whether Broadway will prove hospitable to new musicals that seek to do more than recycle and reshuffle the clichés of yesteryear. To date, no Broadway producer has been willing to take a chance on *Bounce*, Sondheim's latest show, which has yet to play New York. And even though *Avenue Q* has regularly topped the *Wall Street Journal/Zagat Theater Survey* since it opened last fall, it is by no means certain that similarly adventurous musicals would be capable of appealing to a mass audience. Just as many of Sondheim's shows seem more at home in opera houses than on Broadway, so New York's off-Broadway theaters may be more logical venues for the offbeat, small-scale shows that now represent the best creative hope for the musical-comedy idiom.

On the other hand, the appeal of the classic musicals of the 40's and 50's remains undiminished. In part, this is surely due to the high quality of their scores, which have yet to be rivaled, much less surpassed, by later songwriters. But good songs alone do not make a musical revivable. If they did, such obscure shows as *Jubilee* (the source of Cole Porter's "Begin the Beguine" and "Just One of Those Things") and *Very Warm for May* (for which Jerome Kern wrote "All the Things You Are") would be at least as well-known as *Annie Get Your Gun* or *The Music Man*.

In addition to their songs, the classic American musicals remain popular because they embody the way most Americans still feel about themselves, and about their country. Outside of the self-doubting New Class ghettos of Blue America, the ideal of cultural assimilation and the promise of democracy have lost none of their hold on our collective consciousness. I suspect it says something about the enduring power of the American creed that even in New York City, *Assassins* scored a mere 76 percent in the *Wall Street Journal/Zagat* poll, the lowest rating of any show on Broadway.

After all is said and done—after Vietnam and Watergate, after the assassinations of the 60's, after postmodernism and radical relativism and the election of 2000—it can hardly be coincidental that a 30-year-old show like *Fiddler on the Roof* is still drawing crowds to the Minskoff Theatre. As the saying goes, they don't write 'em like they used to, and perhaps they never will again. But even if the mold has been broken once and for all, we will always have the great shows of musical comedy's golden age to remind us of who we are and what we believe.

[5] *Urinetown* later had a successful Broadway run, while *Marie Christine* was produced at Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theatre, a noncommercial house far from the Manhattan theater district that is classified as a "Broadway theater" for the purposes of Tony Award nominations.

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Arabian Fables (I)

How the Arabs soften up world opinion with fanciful myths.

Josef Goebbels, the infamous propaganda minister of the Nazis, had it right. Just tell people big lies often enough and they will believe them. The Arabs have learned that lesson well. They have swayed world opinion by endlessly repeating myths and lies that have no basis in fact.

What are some of these myths?

The "Palestinians." That is the fundamental myth. The reality is that the concept of "Palestinians" is one that did not exist until about 1948, when the Arab inhabitants of what until then was Palestine, wished to differentiate themselves from the Jews. Until then, the Jews were the Palestinians. There was the Palestinian Brigade of Jewish volunteers in the British World War II Army (at a time when the Palestinian Arabs were in Berlin hatching plans with Adolf Hitler for world conquest and how to kill all the Jews); there was the Palestinian Symphony Orchestra (all Jews, of course); there was *The Palestine Post*, and so much more.

> "The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!"

The Arabs, who now call themselves "Palestinians," do so in order to persuade a misinformed world that they are a distinct nationality and that "Palestine" is their ancestral homeland. But, of course, they are no distinct nationality at all. They are entirely the same — in language, customs, and tribal ties — as the Arabs of Syria, Jordan, and beyond. There is no more difference between the "Palestinians" and the other Arabs of those countries than there is between, say, the citizens of Minnesota and of Wisconsin.

What's more, many of the "Palestinians," or their immediate ancestors, came to the area attracted by the prosperity created by the Jews, in what previously had been pretty much of a wasteland.

The nationhood of the "Palestinians" is a myth.

The "West Bank." Again, this is a concept that did not exist until 1948, when the army of the Kingdom of Transjordan, together with five other Arab armies, invaded the Jewish state of Israel, on the very day of its creation.

In what can almost be described as a Biblical miracle, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might. But Transjordan stayed in possession of the territories of Judea and Samaria and part of the city of Jerusalem. The Jordanians promptly expelled all Jews from the area that they occupied, destroyed all Jewish institutions and houses of worship, used Jewish cemetery headstones to build military latrines, and renamed as "West Bank" what had been Judea and Samaria since time immemorial.

The attempt, quite successful, was to persuade an uninformed world that these territories were ancestral parts of the Jordanian Arab Kingdom (itself a very recent creation of British power diplomacy). Even after the total rout of the Arabs in the 1967 Six-Day War, in which the Jordanians were driven out of Judea/Samaria and of Jerusalem, they and the world continued to call this territory the "West Bank", a geographical concept that cannot be found on any except the most recent maps.

The concept of the "West Bank" is a myth.

The "Occupied Territories." After the victorious Six-Day War, during which the Israeli army defeated the same cabal of Arabs that had invaded the country in 1948, Israel remained in possession of Judea/Samaria (now renamed "West Bank"), which the Jordanians had illegally occupied for 19 years; of the Gaza strip, which had been occupied by the Egyptians but which (hundreds of miles from Egypt proper) had never been part of their country; and of the Golan Heights, a plateau of about 400 square miles, which, though originally part of Palestine, had been ceded to Syria by British-French agreement.

The last sovereign in Judea/Samaria and in Gaza was the British mandatory power — and before it was the Ottoman Empire. All of Palestine, including what is now the Kingdom of Jordan, was, by the Balfour Declaration, destined to be the Jewish National Home. How then could the Israelis be "occupiers" in their own territory? Who would be the sovereign and who the rightful inhabitants?

The concept of "occupied territories" in reference to Judea/Samaria and Gaza is a myth created by Arab propaganda.

Unable so far to destroy Israel on the battlefield — though they are feverishly preparing for their next assault — the Arabs are now trying to overcome and destroy Israel by their acknowledged "policy of stages". That policy is to get as much land as possible carved out of Israel "by peaceful and diplomatic" means, so as to make Israel indefensible and softened up for the final assault. The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!

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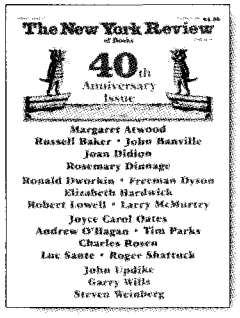

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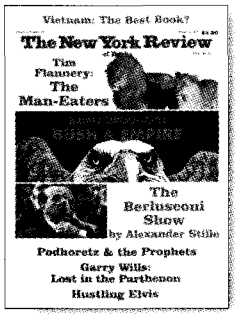

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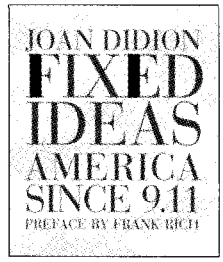

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Books in Review

Comedy of Manners

On Paradise Drive:
How We Live Now
(and Always Have) In
the Future Tense
by David Brooks
Simon & Schuster. 285 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

David Brooks appears to be two different people. One is an earnest fellow who writes a semi-weekly column for the *New York Times* and appears regularly on public television's *NewsHour*. In both venues, his political judgments proclaim him to be informed, reasonable, and conservative-but-not-too-conservative (as evidenced in his recent resounding cheers for gay marriage and lots more Mexican immigration).

The other David Brooks—the one on display in this book—is something of a joker. He calls himself a "comic sociologist," and this implausible label seems about right. It explains the book's considerable strengths, and may also have something to do with its weaknesses.

On Paradise Drive is a sequel. Its four-year-old predecessor, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*, was a best-seller that lovingly but also satirically captured the rise of the "bobos"—the new class of bourgeois bohemians. Brooks was very entertaining on their business lives, their intellectual lives, their spiritual lives. Along the way, he argued persuasively that this upscale cohort defined our age. Products of meritocracy and mass higher education, the bobos embrace American-style success while also gravitating to the values of the 60's and 70's counterculture. "They are the new establishment," Brooks wrote. "Their hybrid culture is the atmosphere we all breathe. Their status codes now govern social life. Their moral codes give structure to our personal lives."

In *On Paradise Drive*, Brooks once again takes on upscale America, but now he is coming at it from different angles. He begins at ground level, with an exquisitely nuanced look at several varieties of the suburban experience. Next he serves up, in "Thyroid Nation," a chapter-length discourse on the energy and mobility of modern Americans, explaining why, in this deeply divided country, class war never really explodes (mainly because you can always move on if you feel oppressed). Then comes an oddball brace of chapters, the first inviting the reader to take a hard look at the two-century-old view of America as a "money-grubbing, empty-headed, shallow-souled, energetic, but incredibly vulgar land," and the second laying out the opposite view—namely, that Americans have always been profoundly spiritual and even today remain somehow connected with the 18th-century idea of our country as a place with a special destiny. Brook's own preference for the latter version is fairly obvious, but he leaves the issue hanging.

In successive chapters titled "Growing," "Learning," "Shopping," and "Working," Brooks next resumes his examination of contemporary suburbia. Finally, in "A History of Imagination," he reverts to several of

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his earlier themes and—for any reader who may still be wondering about the author's view of national values—endorses Walt Whitman's notion "that America is the permanent revolution, that deep in middle-American life, even in the most placid-seeming suburb, there is an unquenchable longing and hope, and it is in committing [ourselves] to far-off dreams that we fight the insularity and the trivialization that threatens to swallow us up every day."

LIKE THE suburban world it describes, this book sprawls. Yet it is extremely readable, and, in Brooks's hands, comic sociology can be screamingly funny. His imagery is fresh and original, and his data are endlessly fascinating. I had not suspected, for instance, that Mesa, Arizona, long identified as a suburb of Phoenix, is now more populous than Minneapolis, St. Louis, or Cincinnati, or that American dwellings offer an average of 718 square feet per inhabitant, far more than people get in any other country.

A highlight of the book is its opening chapter, in which Brooks embarks on an imaginary drive from "bike-messenger land"—one of the new hip bohemian downtowns—to the terrain beyond the suburbs. Every stop along the way is recognizable. First we come to the "crunchy suburbs," a close-to-the-city area marked by downscale incomes, progressive politics, organic cauliflower stands, nuclear-free-zone declarations, and an overrepresentation of men looking like Allen Ginsberg. Next is the inner ring of the "real suburbs," once occupied by Ozzie and Harriet but now dominated by highly educated characters with $250,000 salaries and left-liberal politics who disdain suburban materialism but have somehow ended up with Olympic-sized Jacuzzis—crisply summarized by Brooks as "the emblem of their great sellout"—in their master-bathroom spas. Driving out from these inner-ring suburbs, we arrive at the immigrant enclaves that lie along ugly eight-lane turnpikes and feature grungy convenience stores advertising DynaSky calling cards to Peru. Then come the traditional suburbs, still exuding a whiff of good old Eisenhower America, still raising cheerleaders and trick-or-treaters, and still deeply, blissfully committed to golf.

Finally, we reach the exurbs: formless, fantastically proliferating communities, often spreading into deserts and countryside or snaking between valleys. Many did not exist ten years ago. They have been built, Brooks tells us, "to embody a modern version of the suburban ideal."

The differences between suburb and exurb are instructive. Whereas, in today's suburbs (as defined by the Census Bureau), only 27 percent of the households are inhabited by married couples with children, the exurbs tend overwhelmingly to have intact two-parent families and low divorce rates, and they do not have to worry about crime. Their denizens are also more apt to be corporate managers than professionals—a distinction that means they are far more likely to vote Republican and think conservative, and possibly to have moved out here to get away from lowlifes, immigrants, and people who watch daytime reality TV.

Signaling that he has now reached a group of maximum interest, Brooks suddenly sets aside the statistics, puts on his comic-sociologist hat, and zeros in on an emblematic exurban couple whom he identifies as Patio Man and Realtor Mom. We spy on Patio Man, his eyes glistening in a Home Depot megastore as he buys a megagrill on which he could roast a bison. We ogle Mom shopping at a Wal-Mart Super Center, a monster emporium offering laundry detergent in 41-pound tubs, frozen waffles in 60-serving boxes, and Q-tips in packages of 1,500—that's 3,000 actual swabs, Brooks points out, since there is cotton at both ends. Exiting their separate stores, Realtor Mom and Patio Man spot each other in the parking lot, drive home in their separate cars, babbling away on their separate cell phones, and, aroused by their consumer triumphs, make for the master suite to consummate their reunion on an Ethan Allan Utopia settee.

DAVID BROOKS has his weaknesses. His wordplay is dependably beguiling, but one senses that he is less comfortable with numbers. A numbers man would not tell us, with imprecise precision, that the proportion of Americans believing in heaven is "about 86 percent." Nor would a quantitatively oriented (and possibly humorless) sociologist write a sentence like this: "High-achieving parents are marrying each other and breeding kids who are high-achievement squared, who will in turn make a lot of money and breed their own kids who are high-achievement cubed." The numbers man would have heard about regression to the mean, a statistical phenomenon telling us that the children of high-achieving parents are predicted to be *less* high-achieving.

A more serious matter is the book's lack of any main point or center. *On Paradise Drive* has no real counterpart to the bobos, who imbued Brooks's earlier book with a focus and an organizing principle. Given their supposed centrality in American life, it seems strange that the term is nowhere mentioned in this new book, and similarly near-invisible is the associated thought that upscale America is itself increasingly bohemian.

It is understandable that authors (and publishers) do not like to be seen as recycling old material. Still, the contrast between Brooks's two books is jarring. When *Bobos in Paradise* got around to the subject of American business, Brooks had a lot to say about "countercultural capitalists" and corporations whose charismatic leaders were possessed by social missions. The corporate bosses in *On Paradise Drive*—we meet many of them in the "Working" chapter—turn out to be dowdy

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guys in dowdy companies who became winners by concentrating obsessively on a few small things they can do better than anyone else. The rain forest is not in the picture.

I have already suggested that *On Paradise Drive* wanders all over the lot; this, too, presents a problem. Its shifting topical themes often seem determined less by any large thesis than by a subject's comic potential. The chapter titled "Shopping" is less about the activity of shopping than about the dumb stuff to be found in consumer magazines: *Metropolitan Home*, *Field & Stream*, *Food & Wine*, and onward to *Cigar Aficionado*, *Guitar Player*, and *Malt Advocate* (a quarterly targeting readers serious about their beer and wine). One might wish to learn something about the market economics driving these niche magazines, but Brooks settles for laughs, idly inviting the reader to wonder about such possibilities as *ToughGums* ("The Magazine for Frequent Flossers") and *Pluckings* ("The Magazine of Tweezer Enthusiasts").

But I do confess to chortling again, and also to hoping that comic sociology has a serious future.

Plodders' Plot

Saboteurs:
The Nazi Raid on America
by Michael Dobbs
Knopf. 300 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Jacob Heilbrunn

Michael J. Dobbs, a veteran reporter for the *Washington Post*, has a knack for historical detective work about the Nazi era. In 1997, he uncovered the fact, evidently unknown to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright herself, that she had Jewish grandparents who perished in the Holocaust. Now, in *Saboteurs*, Dobbs chronicles the failed German attempt to carry out a wave of terrorism against American industrial targets during World War II.

The botched raid made banner headlines in 1942, and entered U.S. newspapers again after September 11, 2001, when the Bush administration looked to it for legal precedents for the establishment of military tribunals in which to try terrorist suspects. Drawing extensively on FBI files, German documents, and scores of interviews, Dobbs is the first to tell the full story of a riveting episode that casts some interesting shadows on our current moment.

In 1916, while still a neutral country in World War I, the United States fell victim to a major German

Jacob Heilbrunn *is a member of the editorial board of the* Los Angeles Times.

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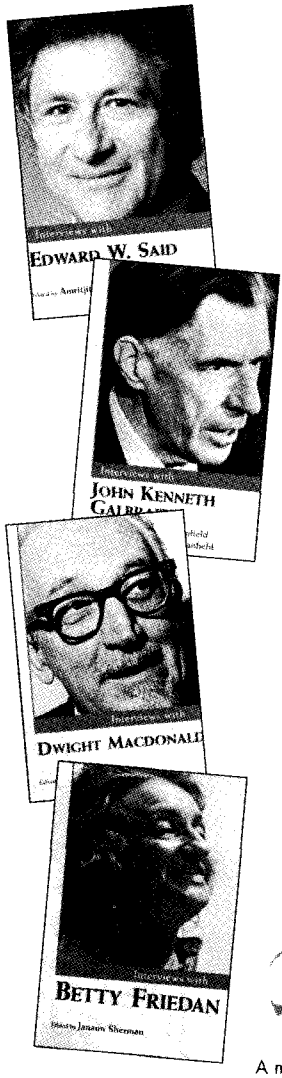

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sabotage attack. Secret agents made their way to New York harbor and blew up a huge ammunition dump on Black Tom Island. Only four decades later, despite this experience, official Washington remained insouciant about a German threat to the U.S. mainland after the start of World War II and indeed even after Pearl Harbor. Though German U-boats were lurking off the East Coast, government agencies put a low premium on domestic security; turf fights left bureaucracies battling each other rather than thinking about how to deter intruders. In particular, President Roosevelt's suggestion that the Coast Guard equip one-man beach patrols with portable radio sets was politely filed away and ignored.

Hitler, however, had wanted to strike the United States even before he declared war against it in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. In April 1942, now officially at war, he endorsed a plan, Operation Pastorius, for infiltrating German-American saboteurs back into the U.S. via submarines. Under the tutelage of Walter Kappe, the former head of the German-American Bund, eleven agents began training in explosives at an Abwehr intelligence school outside the Prussian town of Brandenburg.

Dobbs expertly deploys the wealth of detail he has unearthed to bring this crew to life. The recruits were a motley bunch, and utterly ill-suited for the task at hand. They included George Dasch, a former waiter and manager of a brothel in the United States; twenty-two-year-old Herbie Haupt, who had grown up in Chicago and was lovesick for his old girlfriend; John Burger, a former stormtrooper who had been imprisoned in a concentration camp by his enemies in the Gestapo; and Edward Kerling, a womanizer and fanatical Nazi. When the group traveled to occupied Paris in the first stage of its journey, Dasch forgot his fake identification papers on the train, while another drunken member announced at the bar of the Hotel des Deux Mondes that he was "a secret agent."

By the time the Germans split up into two teams and embarked on their transatlantic journey—one headed to Amagansett, Long Island, the other for a point near Jacksonville, Florida—their number had been reduced to eight. The Long Island group landed first, hauling crates of sophisticated explosives onto the beach only to encounter a young Coast Guardsman on patrol who quickly alerted his superiors, who in turn informed the Navy. Still, even as the U-boat that had transported the saboteurs lay stranded for hours on a sandbar a few hundred yards offshore, waiting for the tide to shift, the Navy made no attempt to capture it, dismissing the Coast Guard's report as of "dubious foundation."

The Coast Guard, for its part, failed to seal off the beach and delayed alerting the FBI about the German agents. Nor did the FBI, once in on the case, prove more adept at tracking them down. After taking the train into Manhattan, the would-be saboteurs swanned about the city, using their ample cash reserves to buy new clothes, to gamble, and to enjoy New York nightlife.

The second crew that landed in Florida was no more assiduous in carrying out its original plan. The lovelorn Herbie Haupt, for one, returned to Chicago, where he moved in with his parents and attempted to marry his old sweetheart.

ON THE whole, the longer the invaders remained at large, the less zeal most of them displayed for carrying out their mission. Indeed, Dasch and Burger, both embittered by their treatment in Germany, soon embarked on a new and diametrically opposed assignment, seeking to turn themselves in and serve the United States. Dasch in particular had a grandiose plan in which the two of them would become radio personalities and play "starring roles in the anti-Hitler propaganda campaign, using as their weapons the knowledge they had gained of the inner workings of the Nazi system."

In a comedy of errors, Dasch proceeded to call the New York office of the FBI to explain that he was a German citizen who had arrived in the U.S. the previous morning, that he had a statement to make about the nation's security, and that he wanted to meet with J. Edgar Hoover. The FBI desk agent duly noted the call in his log but decided it was not worthy of action. Not until several days later, when Dasch traveled to Washington, checked in at the Mayflower hotel, and called Hoover's office directly, did the FBI "crack" the case.

With his usual flair for publicity, Hoover held a dramatic press conference emphasizing the FBI's ingenuity and skill in bringing the German agents to book. Attorney General Francis Biddle, a liberal ornament in FDR's cabinet, was eager to prove his toughness by personally prosecuting the case. In a convoluted decision, the Supreme Court upheld Roosevelt's right to insist on a military tribunal; six of the saboteurs ended up being sentenced to the electric chair, and Dasch and Burger received lengthy prison terms.

The *Quirin* case, as it is known (after one of the defendants), today serves as one of the legal legs holding up the Bush administration's plan to try al-Qaeda fighters. Dobbs tours the issues raised by *Quirin*, yet never makes clear whether he supports or dissents from the original messy decision. But this shortcoming is more than outweighed by the spellbinding nature of the tale itself. Perhaps its most alarming aspect is the continuity it reveals between the fecklessness of the intelligence services during World War II and their haplessness today.

In the summer of 1942, even though we were already at war with a brutal enemy, American homeland defenses were almost as weak as they would prove to be on September 11. And just as the FBI apprehended the German plotters only after they walked in the front door, so the FBI would fail to take action against al-Qaeda operatives reported by the

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CIA to have entered the U.S. In exhuming the case of the Nazi saboteurs, Dobbs has provided a timely warning about the persistent limitations of government agencies charged with detecting and thwarting terrorist acts.

Sand Trap

Inside the Mirage:
America's Fragile Partnership with Saudi Arabia
by Thomas W. Lippman
Westview. 390 pp. $27.50

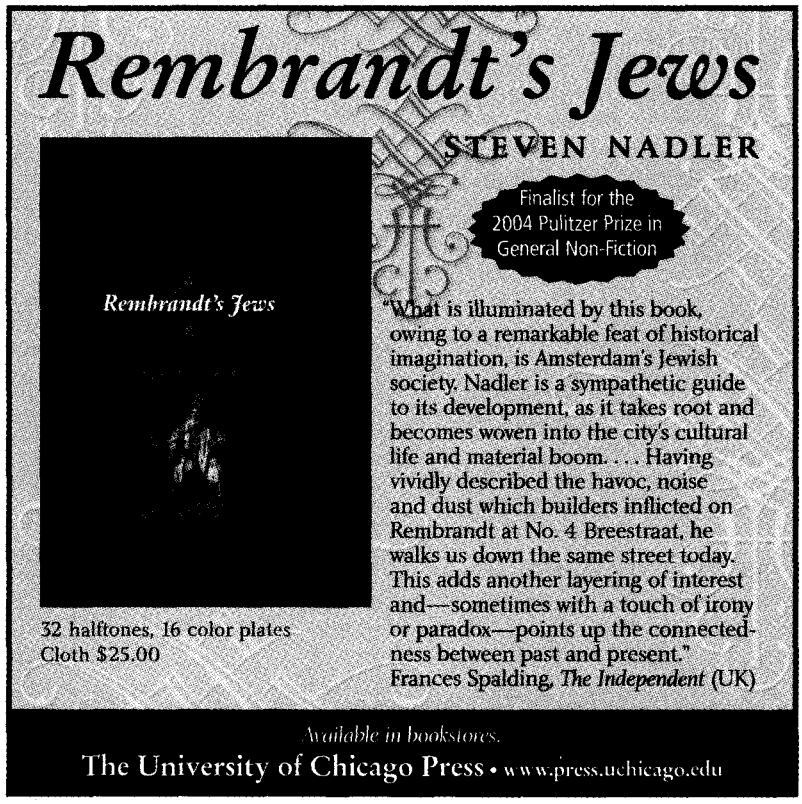
Reviewed by
Joshua Kurlantzick

For Americans, one of the most jarring revelations about the attacks of 9/11 was the fact that fifteen of the nineteen hijackers were Saudis—citizens, that is, of a supposed ally. Polls now show that over 70 percent of the public view Saudi Arabia as untrustworthy, with no small number considering the country an outright adversary. In Washington, politicians once eager for invitations to the Saudi embassy now dodge Prince Bandar, the kingdom's envoy, while energy experts contemplate alternatives to Saudi oil.

In *Inside the Mirage*, Thomas Lippman tries to put this increasingly tense relationship in historical perspective. A longtime Middle East bureau chief for the *Washington Post*, Lippman traces American involvement in Saudi Arabia back to its roots almost a century go. Though the war on terror is not his subject—and barely registers in his account—he makes clear that, long before the unhappy events of 9/11, all was far from well in our dealings with the House of Saud.

As Lippman explains, U.S.-Saudi relations emerged largely by chance.

Joshua Kurlantzick *is foreign editor of the* New Republic.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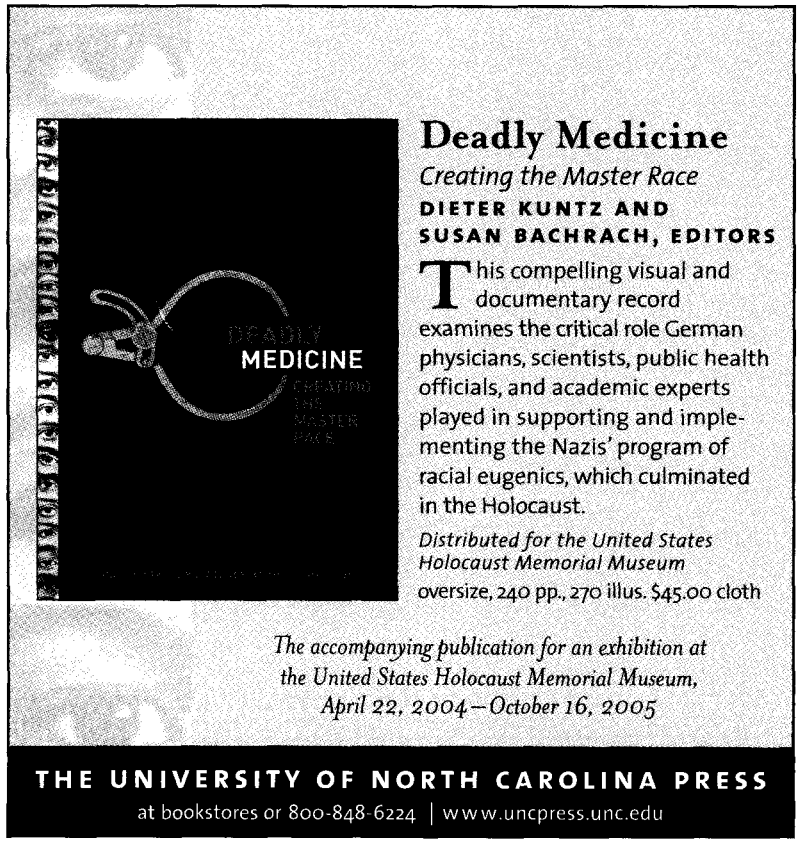
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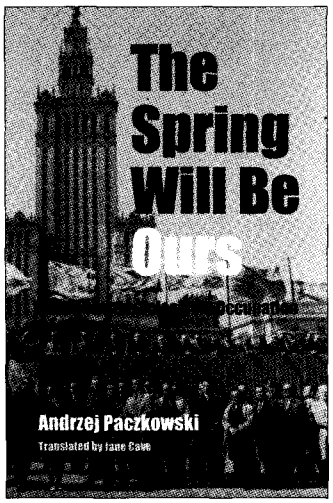

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In 1911, ten soldiers loyal to Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, the founder of the ruling dynasty, were wounded in battle and ended up being treated by American missionary doctors. Ibn Saud never forgot the "infidel" foreigners who gave their help and "asked nothing in return." A decade later, impressed by American technology, he gave the kingdom's oil concession to Standard Oil of California; it began operating before World War II, joining with other oil companies after the war to form Aramco.

Over the next twenty years, thousands of American oil workers and their families arrived in Saudi Arabia. For the pioneers among them, life in the brutally hot desert was tough. Vehicles broke down in the sand, potable water had to be hauled in on donkey carts. As for cultural interaction, Americans were prohibited from dealing with Saudi women and also, to an extent, with Saudi men, out of fear on Ibn Saud's part that the sharing of technical information might lead to the spread of subversive political ideas.

By the 1960's, U.S. know-how had helped the Saudis turn Bedouin villages into Western-style towns. Aramco employees themselves lived in Levittown-like enclaves, in houses equipped with all the modern conveniences. As the wife of an American geologist told Lippman, she and her family enjoyed dinners of "wonderful filet mignon, butter beans, [and] Irish potatoes"—and "the king pick[ed] up the grocery bill." But Americans chafed at the restrictions placed on them by the ultraconservative religious establishment. For women confined to Western compounds and for Christians forced to conduct their religious services in secret, the material comforts of Saudi life were small compensation.

The American companies, foundations, and government officials active in the kingdom hoped that, with time and assistance, Saudi society could be transformed, brought into the modern world. Drawing on Aramco archives, Lippman describes the efforts of executives to find a core of young Saudis who might be trained in American work habits, "stuffed at breakneck speed with information, technology." At the same time, the State Department and the Ford Foundation were busy instructing the royal family on how to set up formal government ministries—a radical break for a regime whose early kings kept the national treasury in trunks under their beds (a habit the Taliban would share with them).

This idealism faded quickly, however, during the oil boom of the 1970's and the subsequent collapse of the Saudi economy in the 1980's and 90's. Most American companies, Lippman shows, were unable to replace foreign workers with Saudis because few Saudis took the initiative to improve their own skills. As for the royal family, it refused to create a modern educational system, and skewed the nation's economy to hinder entrepreneurs. Religious leaders even resisted American efforts to rid Saudi cities of malarial mosquitoes because the spraying would challenge "the inscrutable ways of Allah [as] manifested through the lowly fly."

American officials soon resigned themselves to the kingdom's backwardness and brutality. Lippman describes the case of Scott J. Nelson, a safety engineer at Bechtel, who in 1984 discovered fire hazards in a Saudi hospital. For this embarrassing revelation, the Saudi government locked Nelson up without a trial; in jail, he was beaten with bamboo canes and forced to live in his own filth—outrages greeted with silence by the U.S. embassy (though Congress pressed for his release). Nor did American diplomats protest when Saudi officials handed them copies of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* or demanded that the U.S. not station Jews at its air base in Dhahran. Most fatefully, in hindsight, Washington said little as the

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royal family tried to pacify its Islamist critics by funding "charities" meant to spread Wahhabism and terror to the far corners of the Muslim world.

Lippman is a skilled writer and reporter, and deftly captures the stark lives of the Americans who first ventured into this forbidding kingdom. His account is packed with details—stories culled from extensive interviews, records unearthed from obscure archives. Unfortunately, he too often fails to organize these reams of material to good effect, leaving readers to search on their own for larger themes.

What *Inside the Mirage* makes abundantly clear is that, from the start, the U.S.-Saudi relationship has been conducted on terms dictated by the Saudis. No matter how "liberal" its leader, the House of Saud, linked inextricably to the Wahhabist religious establishment, has never given serious consideration to reform. Behind the rhetoric of mutual friendship—and the dependence of the West on imported oil—the Saudis have felt free to cultivate a deep cultural and religious antipathy to their American patron.

Even cooperation during the first Gulf war, held up by many Saudi experts in the U.S. as a shining example of the "special relationship" between Riyadh and Washington, was in large part an illusion: Lippman shows how many members of the royal family resisted the use of Saudi territory by U.S. troops. After the war, moreover, when many American Arabists predicted we would see an opening in Saudi Arabia, Riyadh went back to business as usual, accommodating Islamic radicalism at home and promoting it abroad.

Though Lippman plainly knows and likes the people of Saudi Arabia, he offers no thoughts about why they have tolerated tyranny for so long. After all, other backward societies have remade themselves over the past half-century. In the 1950's, Singapore was a malarial swamp with high infant-mortality rates and a tiny educated elite. Even some of the Saudi kingdom's oil-rich Arab neighbors, like Dubai, have embraced economic modernization.

Still less explicably, Lippman gives scant attention to the rise of al Qaeda and the growth of the Saudi underclass—developments that have made plain the danger of our long-standing indifference to the trajectory of Saudi society. Lippman simply does not seem to recognize how profoundly the U.S.-Saudi relationship has changed in the wake of 9/11. Indeed, at this critical moment in America's Middle East enterprise—a moment when the House of Saud is $200 billion in debt, when young Saudis are streaming into Iraq to fight coalition forces, and when Wahhabi clerics accuse the U.S. of conspiring with the Shia to destroy the Sunni world—he would seem to be guilty of believing in the mirage that his own book so ably dispels.

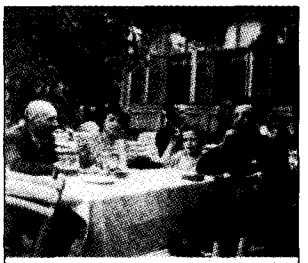
I Do?

Gay Marriage:
Why It Is Good for Gays,
Good for Straights,
and Good for America
by Jonathan Rauch
Times Books. 207 pp. $22.00

Reviewed by
Kay S. Hymowitz

Jonathan Rauch's new volume is the latest entry in a growing list of books representing what might be called the domestic front of the gay-rights movement—those for whom the proper site of activism is no longer the bars and the bathhouses but the Boy Scouts, the wedding chapel, and even the suburban

Kay S. Hymowitz *is a contributing editor of the Manhattan Institute's* City Journal.



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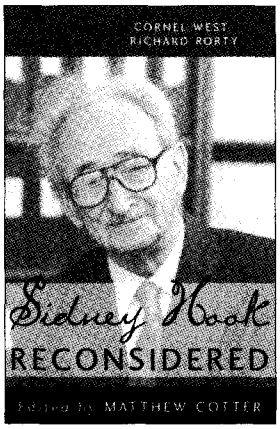

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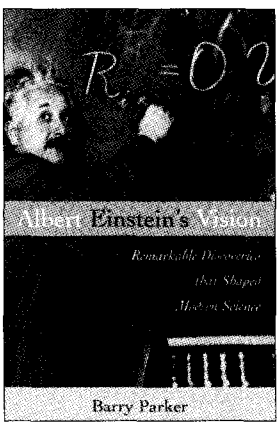

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soccer field. It will surely prove to be one of the most quoted. A columnist for *National Journal* and the author of a number of respected volumes on politics and government, Rauch offers an argument for gay marriage that is smart, reasoned, at points affecting, and—to this reader, at any rate—still short of convincing.

Rauch opens by asking, "What is marriage for?" Perhaps surprisingly, he rejects the view, widely held by other supporters of same-sex unions, that marriage can be defined simply as a committed love relationship, since "married couples are married whether they love each other or not." Nor, he argues, are children the sine qua non, since society still recognizes an infertile couple as married. Marriage, he concludes, has two central social purposes: "settling the young, particularly young men, and providing reliable caregivers."

In Rauch's view, there is no way that informal unions, whether heterosexual or homosexual, can accomplish these ends. Marriage has power because it is "a contract between two people *and their community*" (his emphasis). The social expectations implicit in that contract help explain why spouses stay put even when they have had it with the dirty clothes on the bathroom floor or when they are infatuated with a coworker in the next cubicle. Social expectations, especially when anchored in tradition, make people better than they naturally are.

Accordingly, Rauch argues, mere "civil unions" are no answer to the present impasse. They not only insult homosexuals by pushing them into a "back-of-the-bus" version of marriage; they are a sociological disaster, creating a feeble alternative to matrimony that has the perverse effect of carving out a legal space for impermanence and indecision. Civil unions deliver economic goodies and legal rights that should come only with genuine responsibilities. "If you want the benefits of marriage," he insists, "*get married*" (again his emphasis).

But this is what, so far, society will not permit, with consequences that Rauch sees as damaging to all parties. In this connection he recounts a number of anecdotes testifying to the wrongs suffered by gays in devoted relationships: women who cannot get family leave to help their incapacitated partners, dying men forbidden to see their partners in their final hours. These stories do more than shout injustice, in Rauch's view; they demonstrate how the present system discourages the caregiving impulses that society ought to shore up, while subtly reinforcing the "moral laziness" of Americans when it comes to thinking about the lives of their fellow citizens.

RAUCH DISPUTES most of the scenarios that social conservatives—the "Chicken Little crowd"—have warned would follow the legalization of gay marriage. He dismisses the boys-will-be-boys claim: that gay men would corrupt the ideal of marital fidelity. Though he expects that marriage would indeed go some way toward reducing gay promiscuity, he also points out that, historically, societies have tolerated a certain amount of male adultery without causing the institution to collapse. Nor does he think that gay marriage would open the door to other unconventional sorts of marital arrangements. For Rauch, it is not gay marriage but rather marriage "lite" that would extend the welcome mat to incest and polygamy. Lacking any cultural history, arrangements like civil unions and domestic partnerships risk being hijacked. Gay marriage, on the other hand, affirms the traditional principle of "one person, one spouse."

As for the "sex-centered view" that gay marriage would threaten the traditional family—that is, one consisting of a man, a woman, and their children—Rauch sees this as especially insulting to gays. "There

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is one thing no homosexual couple can do," he bristles, "and that is to procreate." Marriage may be "uniquely good for children," he writes, but that does not mean that procreation is the *reason* for marriage. In fact, the well-being of children is just one more reason to extend marriage to gays, since there are thousands, perhaps even millions, of children living with unwed gay parents.

The one argument that gives Rauch pause is the threat of unintended consequences. Marriage, he concedes, is one of those long-standing human arrangements that have a complex logic often invisible to us. It is impossible to know for certain what the consequences of changing the institution would be. Also troubling is the possibility that insofar as many Americans would refuse to endorse gay marriage even if the law permitted it, the practice would lose its legitimacy and social power.

For Rauch, the solution is to move cautiously, allowing differences in regional opinion to find expression in different state laws. This federalist approach would also let us evaluate the ongoing results of what he admits is a virtually unique experiment. Ultimately, though, Rauch sees no choice but to stop the "scaldingly inhumane" practice of banning gay men and women from the particular form of the "pursuit of happiness" promised by marriage.

In these strange times, it is hard to imagine anyone other than a gay writer (or his nemesis, a religious fundamentalist) capable of proclaiming without irony that "the four most ennobling words in the English language [are] 'Will you marry me?'" But what really sets Rauch's book apart from other calls for same-sex unions is his respect for—and interest in—marriage as something more than a civil right, a public celebration of love, or a delivery system for government benefits. *Gay Marriage* takes us well beyond the usual *Crossfire*-style combat between red- and blue-staters, believers and secularists, rights activists and social conservatives. Rauch has a sophisticated grasp of matrimony as an institution that shapes behavior and provides vital social goods, and he is undoubtedly right to suspect that civil unions would fail on these counts.

But Rauch's sociological acumen fails him on one crucial issue: the connection between marriage and children. Here he resorts to caricature, presenting concerns about maintaining the traditional family as a creepy obsession of the religious Right or as a mere prejudice in favor of "penile-vaginal intercourse." This is hardly serious.

What unites the various forms of marriage over the course of human history is their shared concern to solidify and extend the biological bonds connecting a man, a woman, and their offspring. Marriage is, above all, culture's way to make such families work. By contrast, Rauch's own definition of marriage—"two people's lifelong commitment, recognized by law and by society, to care for each other"—is a thin, highly parochial depiction, one that would be unrecognizable to most people who have ever exchanged vows. To marry is not simply to acquire a devoted lifelong partner; if it were, polygamy would be unknown, and history would have already yielded as many gay marriages as it has grains of thrown wedding rice (a fertility symbol, by the way). The procreative imperative is the only reason we are talking about marriage in the first place.

Rauch suggests two related objections to this line of thinking. First, that marriage is an evolving institution that has changed to meet shifting social realities; as he puts it, our definition of marriage should reflect how "it is practiced today." Second, that since many married couples do not procreate, the primary focus of marriage is clearly not children.

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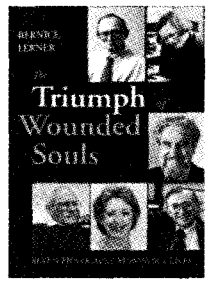

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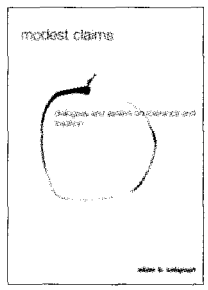

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There is no denying that the institution of marriage has evolved over the centuries and that it has come to satisfy a range of human needs: it creates bonds of kinship, simplifies the division of labor, domesticates young men, and provides sentimental companionship. Unfortunately, over the past several generations, this evolutionary process has gone into such overdrive that the original purpose of marriage—procreation and childrearing—has nearly faded from the collective consciousness. Today, a third of all babies in the U.S. are born to unmarried mothers, and increasing percentages of Americans disagree with the statement that "the purpose of marriage is having children." Defining marriage in terms of how "it is practiced today," as Rauch would have it, is like determining normal by taking the temperature of someone who has a fever.

Rauch is keenly aware of the results of this shift in our cultural mores. As he recently told an interviewer, his interest in marriage arose in part from his realization that the "problems of poverty and crime . . . are really offshoots of the collapse in the family." By just about every measure, the growing disjunction between marriage and childrearing has been bad news for children, for the social order, and for our ideals of equality. Marriage has evolved, all right, but evolution is not the same thing as progress.

Would gay marriage help to cure the institution, as Rauch argues? It is hard to see how. Like Andrew Sullivan, the other major gay conservative voice in support of same-sex unions, Rauch insists that the core meaning of the institution lies in adult mutuality. Children are at best a distant consideration. By defining them out of marriage, Rauch would pull us even farther from its original meaning.

Someone with Jonathan Rauch's grasp of the power of social norms ought to see the danger of promoting a definition of marriage that utterly ignores the fact that, in his words, it is an institution "uniquely good for children." That so capable a thinker fails on this count tells us something about the difficulty we face in addressing the claims, and the grievances, of those who are demanding gay unions.

Nation Builder

The Man Who Would Be King: The First American in Afghanistan
by Ben Macintyre
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 351 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Algis Valiunas

THE GREATEST cautionary tale about high imperialist ambition gone to smash is undoubtedly Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. But a notable runner-up is Rudyard Kipling's 1888 short story, "The Man Who Would Be King"—a far simpler but equally bleak account of Europeans who attain godly power over benighted natives and are destroyed by their taste for exaltation. John Huston directed a fine movie of the Kipling story, starring Sean Connery and Michael Caine, in 1975.

The protagonists of Kipling's tale, Daniel Dravot and Peachy Carnehan, are former soldiers of the Queen in imperial India. They are also a natural pair of scheming rascals: adepts at high-stakes extortion and skullduggery, and confident that if India were in hands as capable as theirs it would yield ten times the current profit. To prove their thesis, they head off to Kafiristan, in the northeast corner of Afghanistan, to make themselves kings and to amass a royal fortune. Village by lonesome village, the adventurers consolidate a small empire, pacifying a population accustomed to endless war and furnishing instruction in civilized essentials such as farming and bridge-building. Their success makes them literal gods in the natives' eyes. But when they are shown to be mere men, the duped locals turn on them; Dravot is sent plunging into a bottomless chasm and Peachy is crucified, surviving only long enough to tell the tale.

Behind Kipling's fiction lies a true story; it has a single protagonist, and he was not British. In *The Man Who Would Be King*, Ben Macintyre, an accomplished forty-year-old British journalist, recounts that story with superb ease, wit, and panache. Macintyre first went to Afghanistan in 1989 as a foreign correspondent covering the endstage of the Soviet-Afghan war, and has been back several times since. He has seen a good deal that most Westerners have not, and he has thought about what he has seen to salutary effect. Although one would be hard-pressed to deduce his politics from this biography of a 19th-century soldier of fortune, it is patent that he appreciates the difficulty involved in bending Afghanistan—and other, similarly dark and refractory countries—to well-intentioned imperial will.

JOSIAH HARLAN (1799-1871) thrived on just such difficulty. Raised a Pennsylvania Quaker, schooled in Latin and Greek, Harlan combined a passion for earthly justice with a craving for earthly glory on a scale that few men ever envision. No idler, he set out to make his wildest dreams come true—dreams that included not only doing tremendously well for himself but also doing colossal good for unfortunate multitudes. In Macintyre's words, Harlan saw his pie-eyed craving to rule a substantial chunk of Asia "not simply as a bid for power, but the gift of a new world order to a benighted corner of the earth."

ALGIS VALIUNAS *contributed "The 'Magic' of Gabriel García Márquez" to our April issue.*

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It was a failed romance back home that propelled the twenty-five-year-old Harlan halfway around the globe, but what he found there surely made him forget the girl who had spurned him. That he had no medical training did not stop him from signing on as a surgeon with a British East India Company military expedition to Burma. There he saw a good bit of action, which to his expansive mind qualified him for greater things.

Harlan conceived his ambitions in the light of the most distinguished precedents. Books do furnish an empire, and his imagination was swimming with imperial notions lifted, especially, from his reading of Plutarch: if Alexander the Great could conquer Afghanistan, what was to stop Josiah Harlan from doing likewise? In 1826, Shah Shujah al-Moolk, the deposed king of Afghanistan, was living out his exile in British India; Harlan offered to restore him to the throne, drumming up a fifth column in Kabul and then leading an invasion force against the reigning monarch, Dost Mohammed Khan. In return, Harlan would be installed as the once and future king's vizier, and would effectively rule the kingdom.

Harlan made his perilous way to Kabul all right, and found it the closest thing going to an earthly paradise; his seductive patter even ingratiated him with Dost Mohammed. But he also realized that his original scheme stood no chance without a British army to provide the firepower. That was not in the works, so it was off to the Punjab for him. There he caught on as a military adviser to the Sikh maharajah, Ranjit Singh, a committed debauchee and self-made ruler of consummate cunning. Once again Harlan's nimble mind earned him brisk advancement: the maharajah appointed him governor of Gujrat, with the stipulation that if he did his job well he would be rewarded handsomely, and that if he failed his nose would be removed from his face. Ranjit's incentives worked onders, and Harlan became quite rich.

After seven tumultuous years, Harlan was expelled from Gujrat for counterfeiting money; only his intense friendship with Ranjit saved him from being sliced to pieces. Now bent on revenge, he returned to Kabul to cultivate once again the friendship of Dost Mohammed. After a year's work preparing the Afghan army, he was eager to try out its new skills; in 1838 the king obligingly sent him with a division to put down a notorious Uzbek warlord and slaver in the northern part of the country. Harlan rode an elephant over the mountain passes of the Hindu Kush, where the air was so thin the very birds were grounded, and in the fastnesses of Hazarajat he struck a monumental bargain. Harlan would help the local powers subdue some pesky insurrectionists, and the kingdom of Hazarajat would belong to him and his descendants in perpetuity.

No American boy could have hoped for a sweeter deal. Harlan's expedition proceeded into the Uzbek city of Balkh, a sometime Hellenic marvel all but leveled by Genghis Khan and subsequent ravagers. There among the ruins, "surrounded by malarial marsh, Harlan imagined a new empire." But the empire would exist in his mind alone. "The newly made American prince of Ghor would never see his principality again."

For the British had plans of their own for Afghanistan. A massive British expedition in 1839 ousted Dost Mohammed, restored Shah Shujah as the imperial puppet, and shouldered Harlan out of the country. He returned to Pennsylvania, married, wrote a memoir so savagely anti-British it scuttled his literary career even in America, became consultant to the U.S. government on the formation of a camel corps, advocated the introduction of Afghan grapevines into America, formed a light-cavalry regiment in the Civil

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War (its troops mutinied at his incompetence and ill treatment), tried desperately and unsuccessfully to get financing for another Afghan expedition, and started up a medical practice in San Francisco, where no one much cared who passed for a doctor. He died there in 1871; there were no mourners at his funeral.

THE COLLISION between Western civilization and Eastern barbarism has become a predominant theme of our time; anyone insufficiently informed about the nature of that barbarism will find this book invaluable. During a royal picnic, for example, when a gust of wind knocked down the tent in which Shah Shujah's wives were concealed from defiling eyes, the king ordered his chief eunuch and protector of the harem to be shorn of his ears; the earless, noseless, tongueless, and castrated among Shah Shujah's courtiers were legion. Such exercise of the royal prerogative abounds in Macintyre's tale, and persists to this day wherever civilization has not intervened to end it.

Where the rulers cavort like gods, the people live like beasts. The "revolting cruelties" with which the Hazar and Uzbek powers forced a starving people to cough up the last of their food appalled Harlan and appalls Macintyre in the telling. Near Bamian, not far from the kingly splendors of Kabul, dung was the stuff of life, used for building, heating, and smoking. The loathsomeness of Dickens's London or Friedrich Engels's Manchester could not touch this all-pervasive misery.

And yet the Afghans hated and resisted the British who attempted to rule them. One can understand why. The would-be conquerors, Macintyre reports, "either abused, displaced, or ignored" the local culture when they took Kabul. Polo, cricket, and tea parties required their energetic attention, and bedding Afghan women was often the extent of their interest in learning about native ways. To Harlan's mind (and Macintyre agrees), a far better result would have been produced by conciliation of tribal chieftains and fiscal diplomacy—that is, judicious bribery. In the end, the British paid dearly for their arrogance. In 1841 Kabul rose up in revolt, and 15,000 British soldiers, women, and children abandoned the city to return to India. Exactly one man made it back alive.

HARLAN REPRESENTED a different breed of imperial adventurer. Admittedly, power and plunder had their attractions for him—indeed, they were the main attractions—but he was also a healer who used his crude skill to cure the blind of their cataracts, a minister of justice who fought against the Uzbek slave trade, and a seeker of knowledge who befriended holy men and delved into arcane lore. Macintyre sums up the complication nicely: "Harlan had always had two sides to his thinking: the Jeffersonian republican and the would-be monarch, the crusader for Western civilization who yet admired and adopted the native ways." That is, Harlan admired what was admirable, and did what he could to eradicate the abominable.

So, is Macintyre's book, like Kipling's story, a cautionary tale? Not in the manner one might fear—that is, as an illustration that the American use of force in places like Afghanistan and Iraq is misguided, vicious, and hopeless, like that of the British before us. Macintyre recognizes the benevolent, philanthropic side to the American character, which is cruel only when absolutely necessary and often not even then, and which, if it can honestly be called imperialist at all, seeks a Jeffersonian "empire of liberty" for all. What America must be most cautious of now is, instead, undue caution: a shying away when peoples steeped in unfreedom for centuries balk violently at an end to tyranny, a failure to accept the necessary cruelty that must be performed in our name. Harlan's story helps show what is needed of us: to be bold and hard, understanding and decent.

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The Case for Operation Iraqi Freedom

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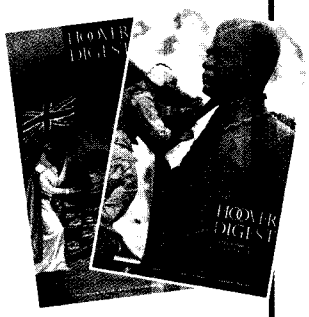

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A year after the elimination of Saddam Hussein's murderous dictatorship, shortly before the Coalition Provisional Authority hands over power to the Iraqi people, and with violence in Iraq on the upswing, **how do the Bush administration's arguments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom hold up?**

Critics assert that those arguments amount to two lies—Saddam's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) posed an imminent threat, and Iraq cooperated with Al Qaeda in executing the 9/11 attacks. In fact, the administration put forth five main arguments in favor of military action. Those arguments were advanced by the administration with varying intensity and frequency—and they hold up, separately and together, reasonably well.

First, in the run-up to war, the Bush administration highlighted the intolerable danger Saddam's WMD posed. Its claims were consistent with Clinton administration claims dating back to 1998, and both were rooted in the best available intelligence. Although we now know that the intelligence was flawed, the Kay report confirmed dozens of Iraqi weapons programs and documented Saddam's intention to restart programs when possible. Dick Cheney's assertion in the summer of 2002 that the risk of inaction in Iraq was greater than the risk of action was debatable. But based on the evidence at hand, and the terrifying new realities September 11, 2001, made manifest, it was a reasonable judgment.

Second, on September 21, 2001, in a nationally televised speech to a joint session of Congress, President Bush declared that the war on terror extended to terrorist networks around the world and to "any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism." Although a link to 9/11 has not been established, Saddam's trafficking in terror is incontestable—among other bloody ventures Iraq had been, until the fall of Baghdad, Hamas's biggest financial backer.

Third, the United States invoked international law. In November 2002, the administration persuaded the U.N. Security Council to unanimously pass resolution 1441, which warned of "serious consequences" if Iraq failed to provide a thorough accounting of its weapons and weapons programs and to completely disarm. In December, U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix reported that Iraq had failed to provide the required account. In March 2003, the United States upheld the Security Council's integrity by implementing 1441 and sixteen previous resolutions flouted by Iraq.

Fourth, humanitarian considerations counseled action. In addition to the hundreds of thousands he consigned to mass graves, and the dissenters his henchmen fed alive into meat grinders, Saddam exploited our containment regime to divert oil-for-food money to his palaces and weapons programs, leading to the deaths, according to the United Nations Children's Fund estimates, of 60,000 Iraqi children a year.

Fifth, **removing Saddam promotes democracy in the Middle East, an appealing prospect save perhaps for those in the region who rule by fear** and for those around the world who profit from doing business with tyrants.

Reasonable people can differ. Arguably, containment better served U.S. national security interests, in part because the establishment of democracy in Iraq may yet prove beyond our competence. The Bush administration has fallen short in educating public opinion—both domestically and internationally regarding Operation Iraqi Freedom. But what cannot be denied, all things considered, is the reasonableness of the case to be made.

—Peter Berkowitz

Peter Berkowitz is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and an associate professor of law at the George Mason University School of Law.

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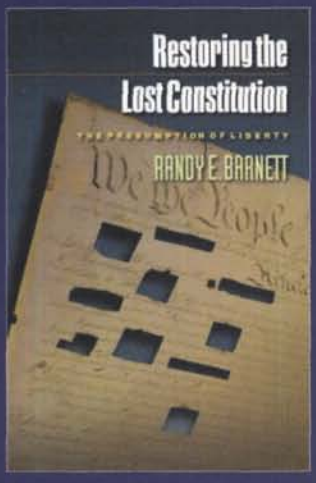

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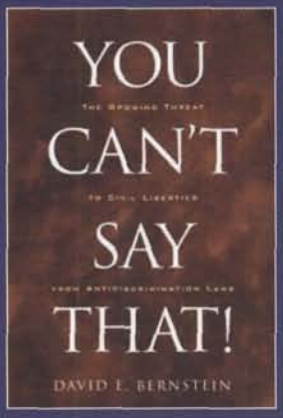

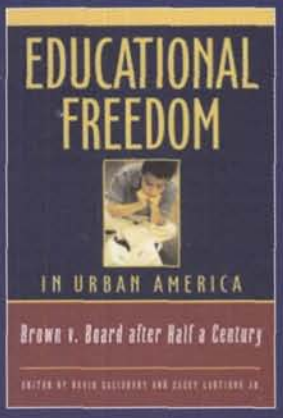

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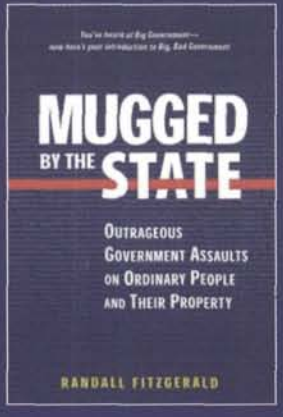

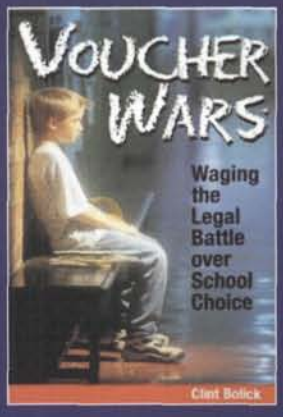

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